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THE EXPANSION OF EUROPE

THE CULMINATION OF MODERN HISTORY

BY

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TO

MY MOTHER

PREFACE

THIS little book is an attempt to survey, without any multiplicity of detail, but with an increasing degree of fullness as the story draws nearer to our own time, the sources and character of the great process by which, during the last four centuries, the whole world has been subjugated by the civilisation of Europe, and its bearing upon the problems of the Great War. I have tried to analyse briefly the nature of the share in this work taken by the chief European peoples who have participated in it. Naturally the predominant place is given to the British Empire. This must in any case have been so, since the British Empire covers one-quarter of the earth's surface. But I have given to it even more than its relative share of attention, partly because it is our chief concern, and partly because the variety of types which it includes makes it the most interesting political structure which has ever existed in the world, while the principles upon which it has gradually come to be directed are

of the highest significance and value, and have not been sufficiently analysed.

The essay was originally designed as one of a set of four, to be included under the general title 'The Culmination of Modern History.' Two of these have been already published under the title of 'Nationalism and Internationalism.' The fourth, on self-government and its development in the modern world, exists in manuscript, and is likely to remain there.

I have to thank my friend, Major W. L. Grant, Professor of Colonial History at Queen's University, Kingston, Canada, for reading the proofs of the book, and for much illuminating criticism.

R. M.

MANCHESTER,
November 1916.

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THE EXPANSION OF EUROPE

I

THE MEANING AND THE MOTIVES OF IMPERIALISM

One of the most remarkable features of the modern age has been the extension of European civilisation over the whole world. This process has formed a very important element in the history of the last four centuries, and it has been strangely undervalued by most historians, whose attention has been too exclusively centred upon the domestic politics, diplomacies, and wars of Europe. It has been brought about by the creation of a succession of 'Empires' by the European nations, some of which have broken up, while others survive, but all of which have contributed their share to the general result; and for that reason the term 'Imperialism' is commonly employed to describe the spirit which has led to this astonishing and world-embracing movement of the modern age.

The terms 'Empire' and 'Imperialism' are in some respects unfortunate, because of the suggestion of purely military dominion which they convey; and their habitual employment has led to some unhappy results. It has led men of one school of thought to condemn and repudiate the

whole movement, as an immoral product of brute force, regardless of the rights of conquered peoples. They have refused to study it, and have made no endeavour to understand it; not realising that the movement they were condemning was as inevitable and as irresistible as the movement of the tides—and as capable of being turned to beneficent ends. On the other hand, the implications of these terms have perhaps helped to foster in men of another type of mind an unhealthy spirit of pride in mere domination, as if that were an end in itself, and have led them to exult in the extension of national power, without closely enough considering the purposes for which it was to be used. Both attitudes are deplorable, and in so far as the words 'Empire,' 'Imperial,' and 'Imperialism' tend to encourage them, they are unfortunate words. They certainly do not adequately express the full significance of the process whereby the civilisation of Europe has been made into the civilisation of the world.

Nevertheless the words have to be used, because there are no others which at all cover the facts. And, after all, they are in some ways entirely appropriate. A great part of the world's area is inhabited by peoples who are still in a condition of barbarism, and seem to have rested in that condition for untold centuries. For such peoples the only chance of improvement was that they should pass under the dominion of more highly developed peoples; and to them a European 'Empire' brought, for the first time, not merely

law and justice, but even the rudiments of the only kind of liberty which is worth having, the liberty which rests upon law. Another vast section of the world's population consists of peoples who have in some respects reached a high stage of civilisation, but who have failed to achieve for themselves a mode of organisation which could give them secure order and equal laws. For such peoples also the 'Empire' of Western civilisation, even if it is imposed and maintained by force, may bring advantages which will far outweigh its defects. In these cases the word 'Empire' can be used without violence to its original significance, and yet without apology; and these cases cover by far the greater part of the world.

The words 'Empire' and 'Imperialism' come to us from ancient Rome; and the analogy between the conquering and organising work of Rome and the empire-building work of the modern nation-states is a suggestive and stimulating analogy. The imperialism of Rome extended the modes of a single civilisation, and the Reign of Law which is its essence, over all the Mediterranean lands. The imperialism of the nations to which the torch of Rome has been handed on, has made the Reign of Law, and the modes of a single civilisation, the common possession of the whole world. Rome made the common life of Europe possible. The imperial expansion of the European nations has alone made possible the vision—nay, the certainty—of a future world-

unity. For these reasons we may rightly and without hesitation continue to employ these terms, provided that we remember always that the aim of a sane imperialism is not the extension of mere brute power, but is the enlargement and diffusion, under the shelter of power, of the essentials of Western civilisation: rational law and liberty.[1] It is by its success or failure in attaining these ends that we shall commend or condemn the imperial work of each of the nations which have shared in this vast achievement.

There are four main motives which can be perceived at work in all the imperial activities of the European peoples during the last four centuries. The first, and perhaps the most potent, is the spirit of national pride, seeking to express itself in the establishment of its dominion over less highly organised peoples. In the exultation which follows the achievement of national unity each of the nation-states in turn, if the circumstances were at all favourable, has been tempted to impose its power over its neighbours,[2] or even to seek the mastery of the world. From these attempts have sprung the greatest of the European wars. From them also have arisen all the colonial empires of the European states. It is no mere coincidence that all the great colonising powers have been unified nation-states, and that their imperial activities have been most vigorous

[1] See the first essay in *Nationalism and Internationalism*, in which an attempt is made to work out this idea.

[2] *Nationalism and Internationalism*, pp. 60, 64, 104.

when the national sentiment was at its strongest among them. Spain, Portugal, England, France, Holland, Russia: these are the great imperial powers, and they are also the great nation-states. Denmark and Sweden have played a more modest part, in extra-European as in European affairs. Germany and Italy only began to conceive imperial ambitions after their tardy unification in the nineteenth century. Austria, which has never been a nation-state, never became a colonising power. Nationalism, then, with its eagerness for dominion, may be regarded as the chief source of imperialism; and if its effects are unhappy when it tries to express itself at the expense of peoples in whom the potentiality of nationhood exists, they are not necessarily unhappy in other cases. When it takes the form of the settlement of unpeopled lands, or the organisation and development of primitive barbaric peoples, or the reinvigoration and strengthening of old and decadent societies, it may prove itself a beneficent force. But it is beneficent only in so far as it leads to an enlargement of law and liberty.

The second of the blended motives of imperial expansion is the desire for commercial profits; and this motive has played so prominent a part, especially in our own time, that we are apt to exaggerate its force, and to think of it as the sole motive. No doubt it has always been present in some degree in all imperial adventures. But until the nineteenth century it probably formed the predominant motive only in regard to the acquisi-

tion of tropical lands. So long as Europe continued to be able to produce as much as she needed of the food and the raw materials for industry that her soil and climate were capable of yielding, the commercial motive for acquiring territories in the temperate zone, which could produce only commodities of the same type, was comparatively weak; and the European settlements in these areas, which we have come to regard as the most important products of the imperialist movement, must in their origin and early settlement be mainly attributed to other than commercial motives. But Europe has always depended for most of her luxuries upon the tropics: gold and ivory and gems, spices and sugar and fine woven stuffs, have from a very early age found their way into Europe from India and the East, coming by slow and devious caravan routes to the shores of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Until the end of the fifteenth century the European trader had no direct contact with the sources of these precious commodities; the supply of them was scanty and the price high. The desire to gain a more direct access to the sources of this traffic, and to obtain control of the supply, formed the principal motive for the great explorations. But these, in their turn, disclosed fresh tropical areas worth exploiting, and introduced new luxuries, such as tobacco and tea, which soon took rank as necessities. They also brought a colossal increment of wealth to the countries which had undertaken them. Hence the acquisi-

tion of a share in, or a monopoly of, these lucrative lines of trade became a primary object of ambition to all the great states. In the nineteenth century Europe began to be unable to supply her own needs in regard to the products of the temperate zone, and therefore to desire control over other areas of this type; but until then it was mainly in regard to the tropical or sub-tropical areas that the commercial motive formed the predominant element in the imperial rivalries of the nation-states. And even to-day it is over these areas that their conflicts are most acute.

A third motive for imperial expansion, which must not be overlooked, is the zeal for propaganda: the eagerness of virile peoples to propagate the religious and political ideas which they have adopted. But this is only another way of saying that nations are impelled upon the imperial career by the desire to extend the influence of their conception of civilisation, their *Kultur*. In one form or another this motive has always been present. At first it took the form of religious zeal. The spirit of the Crusaders was inherited by the Portuguese and the Spaniards, whose whole history had been one long crusade against the Moors. When the Portuguese started upon the exploration of the African coast, they could scarcely have sustained to the end that long and arduous task if they had been allured by no other prospect than the distant hope of finding a new route to the East. They were buoyed up also by the desire to strike a blow for Christianity.

They expected to find the mythical Christian empire of Prester John, and to join hands with him in overthrowing the infidel. When Columbus persuaded Queen Isabella of Castile to supply the means for his madcap adventure, it was by a double inducement that he won her assent: she was to gain access to the wealth of the Indies, but she was also to be the means of converting the heathen to a knowledge of Christianity; and this double motive continually recurs in the early history of the Spanish Empire. France could scarcely, perhaps, have persisted in maintaining her far from profitable settlements on the barren shores of the St. Lawrence if the missionary motive had not existed alongside of the motives of national pride and the desire for profits: her great work of exploration in the region of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi Valley was due quite as much to the zeal of the heroic missionaries of the Jesuit and other orders as to the enterprise of trappers and traders. In English colonisation, indeed, the missionary motive was never so strongly marked. But its place was taken by a parallel political motive. The belief that they were diffusing the free institutions in which they took so much pride certainly formed an element in the colonial activities of the English. It is both foolish and unscientific to disregard this element of propaganda in the imperialist movement, still more to treat the assertion of it by the colonising powers as mere hypocrisy. The motives of imperial expansion, as of other human activities,

are mixed, and the loftier elements in them are seldom predominant. But the loftier elements are always present. It is hypocrisy to pretend that they are alone or even chiefly operative. But it is cynicism wholly to deny their influence. And of the two sins cynicism is the worse, because by over-emphasising it strengthens and cultivates the lower among the mixed motives by which men are ruled.

The fourth of the governing motives of imperial expansion is the need of finding new homes for the surplus population of the colonising people. This was not in any country a very powerful motive until the nineteenth century, for over-population did not exist in any serious degree in any of the European states until that age. Many of the political writers in seventeenth-century England, indeed, regarded the whole movement of colonisation with alarm, because it seemed to be drawing off men who could not be spared. But if the population was nowhere excessive, there were in all countries certain classes for which emigration to new lands offered a desired opportunity. There were the men bitten with the spirit of adventure, to whom the work of the pioneer presented an irresistible attraction. Such men are always numerous in virile communities, and when in any society their numbers begin to diminish, its decay is at hand. The imperial activities of the modern age have more than anything else kept the breed alive in all European countries, and above all in Britain. To this type

belonged the *conquistadores* of Spain, the Elizabethan seamen, the French explorers of North America, the daring Dutch navigators. Again, there were the younger sons of good family for whom the homeland presented small opportunities, but who found in colonial settlements the chance of creating estates like those of their fathers at home, and carried out with them bands of followers drawn from among the sons of their fathers' tenantry. To this class belonged most of the planter-settlers of Virginia, the seigneurs of French Canada, the lords of the great Portuguese feudal holdings in Brazil, and the dominant class in all the Spanish colonies. Again, there were the 'undesirables' of whom the home government wanted to be rid—convicts, paupers, political prisoners; they were drafted out in great numbers to the new lands, often as indentured servants, to endure servitude for a period of years and then to be merged in the colonial population. When the loss of the American colonies deprived Britain of her dumping-ground for convicts, she had to find a new region in which to dispose of them; and this led to the first settlement of Australia, six years after the establishment of American independence. Finally, in the age of bitter religious controversy there was a constant stream of religious exiles seeking new homes in which they could freely follow their own forms of worship. The Puritan settlers of New England are the outstanding example of this type. But they were only one group among many. Hugue-

nots from France, Moravians from Austria, persecuted 'Palatines' and Salzburgers from Germany, poured forth in an almost unbroken stream. It was natural that they should take refuge in the only lands where full religious freedom was offered to them; and these were especially some of the British settlements in America, and the Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope.

It is often said that the overflow of Europe over the world has been a sort of renewal of the folk-wandering of primitive ages. That is a misleading view: the movement has been far more deliberate and organised, and far less due to the pressure of external circumstances, than the early movements of peoples in the Old World. Not until the nineteenth century, when the industrial transformation of Europe brought about a really acute pressure of population, can it be said that the mere pressure of need, and the shortage of sustenance in their older homes, has sent large bodies of settlers into the new lands. Until that period the imperial movement has been due to voluntary and purposive action in a far higher degree than any of the blind early wanderings of peoples. The will-to-dominion of virile nations exulting in their nationhood; the desire to obtain a more abundant supply of luxuries than had earlier been available, and to make profits therefrom; the zeal of peoples to impose their mode of civilisation upon as large a part of the world as possible; the existence in the Western world of many elements of restlessness and dissatisfac-

tion, adventurers, portionless younger sons, or religious enthusiasts: these have been the main operative causes of this huge movement during the greater part of the four centuries over which it has extended. And as it has sprung from such diverse and conflicting causes, it has assumed an infinite variety of forms; and both deserves and demands a more respectful study as a whole than has generally been given to it.

II

THE ERA OF IBERIAN MONOPOLY

During the Middle Ages the contact of Europe with the rest of the world was but slight. It was shut off by the great barrier of the Islamic Empire, upon which the Crusades made no permanent impression; and although the goods of the East came by caravan to the Black Sea ports, to Constantinople, to the ports of Syria, and to Egypt, where they were picked up by the Italian traders, these traders had no direct knowledge of the countries which were the sources of their wealth. The threat of the Empire of Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century aroused the interest of Europe, and the bold friars, Carpini and Rubruquis, made their way to the centres of that barbaric sovereign's power in the remote East, and brought back stories of what they had seen; later the Poli, especially the great Marco, undertook still more daring and long-continued journeys, which made India and Cathay less unreal to Europeans, and stimulated the desire for further knowledge. The later mediæval maps of the world, like that of Fra Mauro (1459),[1] which

[1] Simplified reproductions of this and the other early maps alluded to are printed in Philip's *Students' Atlas of Modern History*, which also contains a long series of maps illustrating the extra-European activities of the European states.

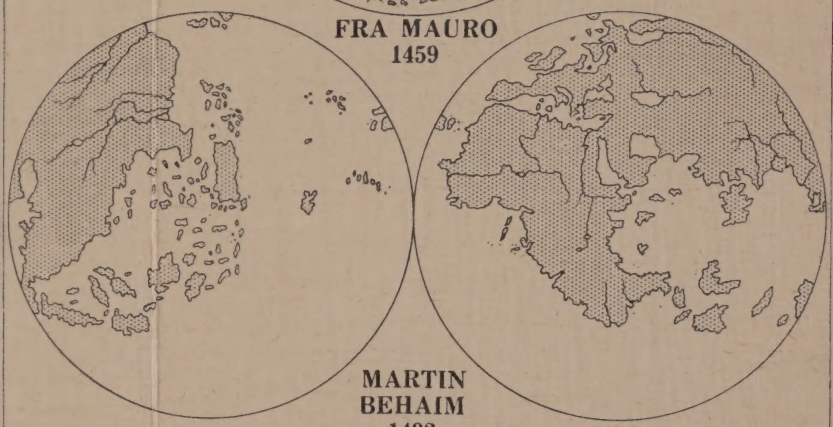
incorporate this knowledge, are less wildly imaginative than their predecessors, and show a vague notion of the general configuration of the main land-masses in the Old World. But beyond the fringes of the Mediterranean the world was still in the main unknown to, and unaffected by, European civilisation down to the middle of the fifteenth century.

Then, suddenly, came the great era of explorations, which in two generations incredibly transformed the aspect of the world. The marvellous character of this revelation can perhaps be illustrated by the comparison of two maps, that of Behaim, published in 1492, and that of Schöner, published in 1523. Behaim's map shows little advance upon Fra Mauro, except that it gives a clearer idea of the shape of Africa, due to the earlier explorations of the Portuguese. But Schöner's map shows that the broad outlines of the distribution of the land-masses of both hemispheres were already in 1523 pretty clearly understood. This astonishing advance was due to the daring and enterprise of the Portuguese explorers, Diaz, Da Gama, Cabral, and of the adventurers in the service of Spain, Columbus, Balboa, Vespucci, and—greatest of them all—Magellan.

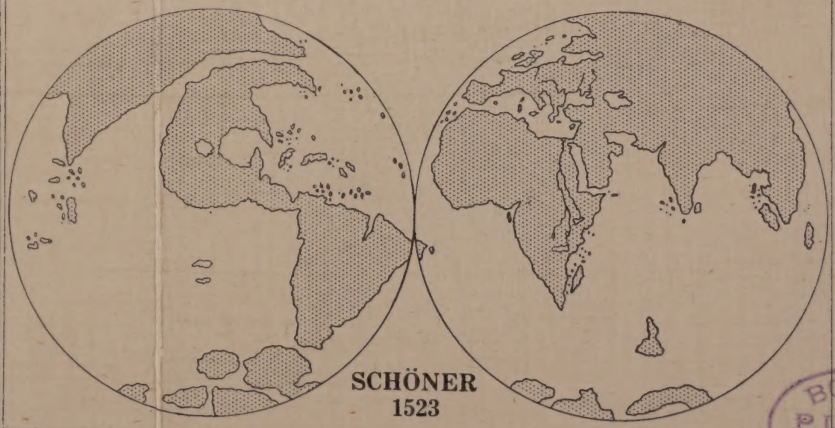
These astonishing discoveries placed for a time the destinies of the outer world in the hands of Spain and Portugal, and the first period of European imperialism is the period of Iberian monopoly, extending to 1588. A Papal award in

THREE EARLY MAPS

FRA MAURO
1459



MARTIN
BEHAIM
1492



SCHÖNER
1523

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1493 confirmed the division of the non-European world between the two powers, by a judgment which the orthodox were bound to accept, and did accept for two generations. All the oceans, except the North Atlantic, were closed to the navigators of other nations; and these two peoples were given, for a century, the opportunity of showing in what guise they would introduce the civilisation of Europe to the rest of the globe. Pioneers as they were in the work of imperial development, it is not surprising that they should have made great blunders; and in the end their foreign dominions weakened rather than strengthened the home countries, and contributed to drag them down from the high place which they had taken among the nations.

The Portuguese power in the East was never more than a commercial dominion. Except in Goa, on the west coast of India, no considerable number of settlers established themselves at any point; and the Goanese settlement is the only instance of the formation of a mixed race, half Indian and half European. Wherever the Portuguese power was established, it proved itself hard and intolerant; for the spirit of the Crusader was ill-adapted to the establishment of good relations with the non-Christian peoples. The rivalry of Arab traders in the Indian Ocean was mercilessly destroyed, and there was as little mercy for the Italian merchants, who found the stream of goods that the Arabs had sent them by way of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf

almost wholly intercepted. No doubt any other people, finding itself in the position which the Portuguese occupied in the early sixteenth century, would have been tempted to use their power in the same way to establish a complete monopoly; but the success with which the Portuguese attained their aim was in the end disastrous to them. It was followed by, if it did not cause, a rapid deterioration of the ability with which their affairs were directed; and when other European traders began to appear in the field, they were readily welcomed by the princes of India and the tribal chieftains of the Spice Islands. In the West the Portuguese settlement in Brazil was a genuine colony, or branch of the Portuguese nation, because here there existed no earlier civilised people to be dominated. But both in East and West the activities of the Portuguese were from the first subjected to an over-rigid control by the home government. Eager to make the most of a great opportunity for the national advantage, the rulers of Portugal allowed no freedom to the enterprise of individuals. The result was that in Portugal itself, in the East, and in Brazil, initiative was destroyed, and the brilliant energy which this gallant little nation had displayed evaporated within a century. It was finally destroyed when, in 1580, Portugal and her empire fell under the dominion of Spain, and under all the reactionary influences of the government of Philip II. By the time this heavy yoke was shaken off, in the middle of the seventeenth

century, the Portuguese dominions had fallen into decay. To-day nothing of it remains save 'spheres of influence' on the western and eastern coasts of Africa, two or three ports on the coast of India, the Azores, and the island of Maçao off the coast of China.

The Spanish dominion in Central and South America was of a different character. When once they had realised that it was not a new route to Asia, but a new world, that Columbus had discovered for them, the Spaniards sought no longer mainly for the riches to be derived from traffic, but for the precious metals, which they unhappily discovered in slight quantities in Hispaniola, but in immense abundance in Mexico and Peru. It is impossible to exaggerate the heroic valour and daring of Cortez, Pizarro, Hernando de Soto, Orellana, and the rest of the *conquistadores* who carved out in a single generation the vast Spanish empire in Central and South America; but it is equally impossible to exaggerate their cruelty, which was born in part of the fact that they were a handful among myriads, in part of the fierce traditions of crusading warfare against the infidel. Yet without undervaluing their daring, it must be recognised that they had a comparatively easy task in conquering the peoples of these tropical lands. In the greater islands of the West Indies they found a gentle and yielding people, who rapidly died out under the forced labour of the mines and plantations, and had to be replaced by negro slave-labour imported from Africa. In

Mexico and Peru they found civilisations which on the material side were developed to a comparatively high point, and which collapsed suddenly when their governments and capitals had been overthrown; while their peoples, habituated to slavery, readily submitted to a new servitude. It must be recognised, to the honour of the government of Charles v. and his successors, that they honestly attempted to safeguard the usages and possessions of the conquered peoples, and to protect them in some degree against the exploitation of their conquerors. But it was the protection of a subject race doomed to the condition of Helotage; they were protected, as the Jews were protected by the kings of mediæval England, because they were a valuable asset of the crown. The policy of the Spanish government did not avail to prevent an intermixture of the races, because the Spaniards themselves came from a sub-tropical country, and the Mexicans and Peruvians especially were separated from them by no impassable gulf such as separates the negro or the Australian bushman from the white man. Central and Southern America thus came to be peopled by a hybrid race, speaking Spanish, large elements of which were conscious of their own inferiority. This in itself would perhaps have been a barrier to progress. But the concentration of attention upon the precious metals, and the neglect of industry due to this cause and to the employment of slave-labour, formed a further obstacle. And in addition to all, the Spanish

government, partly with a view to the execution of its native policy, partly because it regarded the precious metals as the chief product of these lands and wished to maintain close control over them, and partly because centralised autocracy was carried to its highest pitch in Spain, allowed little freedom of action to the local governments, and almost none to the settlers. It treated the trade of these lands as a monopoly of the home country, to be carried on under the most rigid control. It did little or nothing to develop the natural resources of the empire, but rather discouraged them lest they should compete with the labours of the mine; and in what concerned the intellectual welfare of its subjects, it limited itself, as in Spain, to ensuring that no infection of heresy or freethought should reach any part of its dominions. All this had a deadening effect; and the surprising thing is, not that the Spanish Empire should have fallen into an early decrepitude, but that it should have shown such comparative vigour, tenacity, and power of expansion as it actually exhibited. Not until the nineteenth century did the vast natural resources of these regions begin to undergo any rapid development; that is to say, not until most of the settlements had discarded the connection with Spain; and even then, the defects bred into the people by three centuries of reactionary and unenlightened government produced in them an incapacity to use their newly won freedom, and condemned these lands to a long period of anarchy.

It would be too strong to say that it would have been better had the Spaniards never come to America; but it is undeniable that their dominion afforded a far from happy illustration of the working of Western civilisation in a new field, and exercised a very unfortunate reaction upon the life of the mother-country.

The conquest of Portugal and her empire by Philip II., in 1580, turned Spain into a Colossus bestriding the world, and it was inevitable that this world-dominion should be challenged by the other European states which faced upon the Atlantic. The challenge was taken up by three nations, the English, the French, and the Dutch, all the more readily because the very existence of all three and the religion of two of them were threatened by the apparently overwhelming strength of Spain in Europe. As in so many later instances, the European conflict was inevitably extended to the non-European world. From the middle of the sixteenth century onwards these three peoples attempted, with increasing daring, to circumvent or to undermine the Spanish power, and to invade the sources of the wealth which made it dangerous to them; but the attempt, so far as it was made on the seas and beyond them, was in the main, and for a long time, due to the spontaneous energies of volunteers, not to the purposive action of governments. Francis I. of France sent out the Venetian Verazzano to explore the American shores of the North Atlantic, as Henry VII. of England had earlier sent the

Genoese Cabots. But nothing came of these official enterprises. More effective were the pirate adventurers who preyed upon the commerce between Spain and her possessions in the Netherlands as it passed through the Narrow Seas, running the gauntlet of English, French, and Dutch. More effective still were the attempts to find new routes to the East, not barred by the Spanish dominions, by a north-east or a north-west passage; for some of the earlier of these adventures led to fruitful unintended consequences, as when the Englishman Chancellor, seeking for a north-east passage, found the route to Archangel and opened up a trade with Russia, or as when the Frenchman Cartier, seeking for a north-west passage, hit upon the great estuary of the St. Lawrence, and marked out a claim for France to the possession of the area which it drained. Most effective of all were the smuggling and piratical raids into the reserved waters of West Africa and the West Indies, and later into the innermost penetralia of the Pacific Ocean, which were undertaken with rapidly increasing boldness by the navigators of all three nations, but above all by the English. Drake is the supreme exponent of these methods; and his career illustrates in the clearest fashion the steady diminution of Spanish prestige under these attacks, and the growing boldness and maritime skill of its attackers.

From the time of Drake's voyage round the world (1577) and its insulting defiance of the

Spanish power on the west coast of South America, it became plain that the maintenance of Spanish monopoly could not last much longer. It came to its end, finally and unmistakably, in the defeat of the Grand Armada. That supreme victory threw the ocean roads of trade open, not to the English only, but to the sailors of all nations. In its first great triumph the English navy had established the Freedom of the Seas, of which it has ever since been the chief defender. Since 1588 no power has dreamt of claiming the exclusive right of traversing any of the open seas of the world, as until that date Spain and Portugal had claimed the exclusive right of using the South Atlantic, the Pacific, and the Indian Oceans.

So ends the first period in the imperial expansion of the Western peoples, the period of Spanish and Portuguese monopoly. Meanwhile, unnoticed in the West, a remarkable eastward expansion was being effected by the Russian people. By insensible stages they had passed the unreal barrier between Europe and Asia, and spread themselves thinly over the vast spaces of Siberia, subduing and assimilating the few and scattered tribes whom they met; by the end of the seventeenth century they had already reached the Pacific Ocean. It was a conquest marked by no great struggles or victories, an insensible permeation of half a continent. This process was made the easier for the Russians, because in their own stock were blended elements of the Mongol race which they found scattered over Siberia:

they were only reversing the process which Genghis Khan had so easily accomplished in the thirteenth century. And as the Russians had scarcely yet begun to be affected by Western civilisation, there was no great cleavage or contrast between them and their new subjects, and the process of assimilation took place easily. But the settlement of Siberia was very gradual. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the total population of this vast area amounted to not more than 300,000 souls, and it was not until the nineteenth century that there was any rapid increase.

III

THE RIVALRY OF THE DUTCH, THE FRENCH AND THE ENGLISH, 1588-1763

THE second period of European imperialism is filled with the rivalries of the three nations which had in different degrees contributed to the break-down of the Spanish monopoly, the Dutch, the French, and the English. It covers the period from 1588 to 1763. But this long period in its turn naturally falls into three sections. The first of these extends from 1588 to about 1660, and may be called the period of experiment and settlement; during its course the leadership falls to the Dutch. The second extends from 1660 to 1713, and may be called the period of systematic colonial policy, and of growing rivalry between France and England. The third, from 1713 to 1763, is dominated by the intense rivalry of these two countries, decadent Spain joining in the conflict on the side of France, while the declining power of the Dutch was on the whole ranged on the side of Britain; and it ends with the complete ascendancy of Britain, supreme at once in the West and in the East.

(*a*) *The Period of Settlement*, 1588-1660

The special interest of the first half of the seventeenth century is that in the trading and colonial experiments of this period the character of the work which was to be done by the three new candidates for extra-European empire was already very clearly and instructively displayed. They met as rivals in every field: in the archipelago of the West Indies, and the closely connected slaving establishments of West Africa, in the almost empty lands of North America, and in the trading enterprises of the far East; and everywhere a difference of spirit and method appeared.

The Dutch, who made a far more systematic and more immediately profitable use of the opportunity than either of their rivals, regarded the whole enterprise as a great national commercial venture. It was conducted by two powerful trading corporations, the Company of the East Indies and the Company of the West Indies; but though directed by the merchants of Amsterdam, these were genuinely national enterprises; their shareholders were drawn from every province and every class; and they were backed by all the influence which the States-General of the United Provinces—controlled during this period mainly by the commercial interest—was able to wield.

The Company of the East Indies was the richer and the more powerful of the two, because the

trade of the Far East was beyond comparison the most lucrative in the world. Aiming straight at the source of the greatest profits—the trade in spices—the Dutch strove to establish a monopoly control over the Spice Islands and, in general, over the Malay Archipelago; and they were so successful that their influence remains to-day predominant in this region. Their first task was to overthrow the ascendancy of the Portuguese, and in this they were willing to co-operate with the English traders. But the bulk of the work was done by the Dutch, for the English East India Company was poor in comparison with the Dutch, was far less efficiently organised, and, in especial, could not count upon the steady support of the national government. It was mainly the Dutch who built forts and organised factories, because they alone had sufficient capital to maintain heavy standing charges. Not unnaturally they did not see why the English should reap any part of the advantage of their work, and set themselves to establish a monopoly. In the end the English were driven out with violence. After the Massacre of Amboyna (1623) their traders disappeared from these seas, and the Dutch supremacy remained unchallenged until the nineteenth century.

It was a quite intolerant commercial monopoly which they had instituted, but from the commercial point of view it was administered with great intelligence. Commercial control brought in its train territorial sovereignty, over Java and

many of the neighbouring islands; and this sovereignty was exercised by the directors of the company primarily with a view to trade interests. It was a trade despotism, but a trade despotism wisely administered, which gave on the whole justice and order to its native subjects. On the mainland of India the Dutch never attained a comparable degree of power, because the native states were strong enough to hold them in check. But in this period their factories were more numerous and more prosperous than those of the English, their chief rivals; and over the island of Ceylon they established an ascendancy almost as complete as that which they had created in the archipelago.

They were intelligent enough also to see the importance of good calling-stations on the route to the East. For this purpose they planted a settlement in Mauritius, and another at the Cape of Good Hope. But these settlements were never regarded as colonies. They were stations belonging to a trading company; they remained under its complete control, and were allowed no freedom of development, still less any semblance of self-government. If Cape Colony grew into a genuine colony, or offshoot of the mother-country, it was in spite of the company, not by reason of its encouragement, and from first to last the company's relations with the settlers were of the most unhappy kind. For the company would do nothing at the Cape that was not necessary for the Eastern trade, which was its supreme interest,

and the colonists naturally did not take the same view. It was this concentration upon purely commercial aims which also prevented the Dutch from making any use of the superb field for European settlement opened up by the enterprise of their explorers in Australia and New Zealand. These fair lands were left unpeopled, largely because they promised no immediate trade profits.

In the West the enterprises of the Dutch were only less vigorous than in the East, and they were marked by the same feature of an intense concentration upon the purely commercial aspect. While the English and (still more) the French adventurers made use of the lesser West Indian islands, unoccupied by Spain, as bases for piratical attacks upon the Spanish trade, the Dutch, with a shrewd instinct, early deserted this purely destructive game for the more lucrative business of carrying on a smuggling trade with the Spanish mainland; and the islands which they acquired (such as Curaçoa) were, unlike the French and English islands, especially well placed for this purpose. They established a sugar colony in Guiana. But their main venture in this region was the conquest of a large part of Northern Brazil from the Portuguese (1624); and here their exploitation was so merciless, under the direction of the Company of the West Indies, that the inhabitants, though they had been dissatisfied with the Portuguese government, and had at first welcomed the Dutch conquerors, soon

revolted against them, and after twenty years drove them out.

On the mainland of North America the Dutch planted a single colony—the New Netherlands, with its capital at New Amsterdam, later New York. Their commercial instinct had once more guided them wisely. They had found the natural centre for the trade of North America; for by way of the river Hudson and its affluent, the Mohawk, New York commands the only clear path through the mountain belt which everywhere shuts off the Atlantic coast region from the central plain of America. Founded and controlled by the Company of the West Indies, this settlement was intended to be, not primarily the home of a branch of the Dutch nation beyond the seas, but a trading-station for collecting the furs and other products of the inland regions. At Orange (Albany), which stands at the junction of the Mohawk and the Hudson, the Dutch traders collected the furs brought in by Indian trappers from west and north; New Amsterdam was the port of export; and if settlers were encouraged, it was only that they might supply the men and the means and the food for carrying on this traffic. The Company of the West Indies administered the colony purely from this point of view. No powers of self-government were allowed to the settlers; and, as in Cape Colony, the relations between the colonists and the governing company were never satisfactory, because the colonists felt that their interests were wholly subordinated.

The distinguishing feature of French imperial activity during this period was its dependence upon the support and direction of the home government, which was the natural result of the highly centralised régime established in France during the modern era. Only in one direction was French activity successfully maintained by private enterprise, and this was in the not very reputable field of West Indian buccaneering, in which the French were even more active than their principal rivals and comrades, the English. The word 'buccaneer' itself comes from the French: *boucan* means the wood-fire at which the pirates dried and smoked their meat, and these fires, blazing on the headlands of deserted islands, must often have warned merchant vessels to avoid an ever-present danger. The island of Tortuga, which commands the passage between Cuba and Hispaniola through which the bulk of the Spanish traffic passed on its way from Mexico to Europe, was the most important of the buccaneering bases, and although it was at first used by the buccaneers of all nations, it soon became a purely French possession, as did, later, the adjoining portion of the island of Hispaniola (San Domingo). The French did, indeed, like the English, plant sugar colonies in some of the lesser Antilles; but during the first half of the seventeenth century they attained no great prosperity.

For the greater enterprises of trade in the East and colonisation in the West, the French relied almost wholly upon government assistance, and

although both Henry IV. in the first years of the century, and Richelieu in its second quarter, were anxious to give what help they could, internal dissensions were of such frequent occurrence in France during this period that no systematic or continuous governmental aid was available. Hence the French enterprises both in the East and in the West were on a small scale, and achieved little success. The French East India Company was all but extinct when Colbert took it in hand in 1664; it was never able to compete with its Dutch or even its English rival.

But the period saw the establishment of two French colonies in North America: Acadia (Nova Scotia) on the coast, and Canada, with Quebec as its centre, in the St. Lawrence valley, separated from one another on land by an almost impassable barrier of forest and mountain. These two colonies were founded, the first in 1605 and the second in 1608, almost at the same moment as the first English settlement on the American continent. They had a hard struggle during the first fifty years of their existence; for the number of settlers was very small, the soil was barren, the climate severe, and the Red Indians, especially the ferocious Iroquois towards the south, were far more formidable enemies than those who bordered on the English colonies.

There is no part of the history of European colonisation more full of romance and of heroism than the early history of French Canada; an incomparable atmosphere of gallantry and

devotion seems to overhang it. From the first, despite their small numbers and their difficulties, these settlers showed a daring in exploration which was only equalled by the Spaniards, and to which there is no parallel in the records of the English colonies. At the very outset the great explorer Champlain mapped out the greater part of the Great Lakes, and thus reached farther into the continent than any Englishman before the end of the eighteenth century; and although this is partly explained by the fact that the St. Lawrence and the lakes afforded an easy approach to the interior, while farther south the forest-clad ranges of the Alleghanies constituted a very serious barrier, this does not diminish the French pre-eminence in exploration. Nor can anything in the history of European colonisation surpass the heroism of the French missionaries among the Indians, who faced and endured incredible tortures in order to bring Christianity to the barbarians. No serious missionary enterprise was ever undertaken by the English colonists; this difference was in part due to the fact that the missionary aim was definitely encouraged by the home government in France. From the outset, then, poverty, paucity of numbers, gallantry, and missionary zeal formed marked features of the French North American colonies.

In other respects they very clearly reproduced some of the features of the motherland. Their organisation was strictly feudal in character. The real unit of settlement and government was

the *seigneurie*, an estate owned by a Frenchman of birth, and cultivated by his vassals, who found refuge from an Indian raid, or other danger, in the stockaded house which took the place of a *château*, much as their remote ancestors had taken refuge from the raids of the Northmen in the castles of their seigneur's ancestors. And over this feudal society was set, as in France, a highly centralised government wielding despotic power, and in its turn absolutely subject to the mandate of the Crown at home. This despotic government had the right to require the services of all its subjects in case of need; and it was only the centralised government of the colony, and the warlike and adventurous character of its small feudalised society, which enabled it to hold its own for so long against the superior numbers but laxer organisation of its English neighbours. A despotic central power, a feudal organisation, and an entire dependence upon the will of the King of France and upon his support, form, therefore, the second group of characteristics which marked the French colonies. They were colonies in the strictest sense, all the more because they reproduced the main features of the home system.

Nothing could have differed more profoundly from this system than the methods which the English were contemporaneously applying, without plan or clearly defined aim, and guided only by immediate practical needs, and by the rooted traditions of a self-governing people. Their enter-

prises received from the home government little direct assistance, but they throve better without it; and if there was little assistance, there was also little interference. In the East the English East India Company had to yield to the Dutch the monopoly of the Malayan trade, and bitterly complained of the lack of government support; but it succeeded in establishing several modest factories on the coast of India, and was on the whole prosperous. But it was in the West that the distinctive work of the English was achieved during this period, by the establishment of a series of colonies unlike any other European settlements which had yet been instituted. Their distinctive feature was self-government, to which they owed their steadily increasing prosperity. No other European colonies were thus managed on the principle of autonomy. Indeed, these English settlements were in 1650 the only self-governing lands in the world, apart from England herself, the United Provinces, and Switzerland.

The first English colony, Virginia, was planted in 1608 by a trading company organised for the purpose, whose subscribers included nearly all the London City Companies, and about seven hundred private individuals of all ranks. Their motives were partly political ('to put a bit in the ancient enemy's (Spain's) mouth'), and partly commercial, for they hoped to find gold, and to render England independent of the marine supplies which came from the Baltic. But profit was not their sole aim; they were moved also by

the desire to plant a new England beyond the seas. They made, in fact, no profits; but they did create a branch of the English stock, and the young squires' and yeomen's sons who formed the backbone of the colony showed themselves to be Englishmen by their unwillingness to submit to an uncontrolled direction of their affairs. In 1619, acting on instructions received from England, the company's governor summoned an assembly of representatives, one from each township, to consult on the needs of the colony. This was the first representative body that had ever existed outside Europe, and it indicated what was to be the character of English colonisation. Henceforth the normal English method of governing a colony was through a governor and an executive council appointed by the Crown or its delegate, and a representative assembly, which wielded full control over local legislation and taxation. 'Our present happiness,' said the Virginian Assembly in 1640, 'is exemplified by the freedom of annual assemblies and by legal trials by juries in all civil and criminal causes.'

The second group of English colonies, those of New England, far to the north of Virginia, reproduced in an intensified form this note of self-government. Founded in the years following 1620, these settlements were the outcome of Puritan discontents in England. The commercial motive was altogether subsidiary in their establishment; they existed in order that the doctrine and discipline of Puritanism might find a home

where its ascendancy would be secure. It was indeed under the guise of a commercial company that the chief of these settlements was made, but the company was organised as a means of safeguarding the colonists from Crown interference, and at an early date its headquarters were transferred to New England itself. Far from desiring to restrict this freedom, the Crown up to a point encouraged it. Winthrop, one of the leading colonists, tells us that he had learnt from members of the Privy Council 'that his Majesty did not intend to impose the ceremonies of the Church of England upon us; for that it was considered that it was the freedom from such things that made people come over to us.' The contrast between this licence and the rigid orthodoxy enforced upon French Canada or Spanish America is very instructive. It meant that the New World, so far as it was controlled by England, was to be open as a place of refuge for those who disliked the restrictions thought necessary at home. The same note is to be found in the colony of Maryland, planted by the Roman Catholic Lord Baltimore in 1632, largely as a place of refuge for his co-religionists. He was encouraged by the government of Charles I. in this idea, and the second Lord Baltimore reports that his father 'had absolute liberty to carry over any from his Majesty's Dominions willing to go. But he found very few but such as . . . could not conform to the laws of England relating to religion. These declared themselves willing to plant in this

province, if they might have a general toleration settled by law.' Maryland, therefore, became the first place in the world of Western civilisation in which full religious toleration was allowed; for the aim of the New Englanders was not religious freedom, but a free field for the rigid enforcement of their own shade of orthodoxy.

Thus, in these first English settlements, the deliberate encouragement of varieties of type was from the outset a distinguishing note, and the home authorities neither desired nor attempted to impose a strict uniformity with the rules and methods existing in England. There was as great a variety in social and economic organisation as in religious beliefs between the aristocratic planter colonies of the south and the democratic agricultural settlements of New England. In one thing only was there uniformity: every settlement possessed self-governing institutions, and prized them beyond all other privileges. None, indeed, carried self-government to so great an extent as the New Englanders. They came out organised as religious congregations, in which every member possessed equal rights, and they took the congregational system as the basis of their local government, and church membership as the test of citizenship; nor did any other colonies attain the right, long exercised by the New Englanders, of electing their own governors. But there was no English settlement, not even the little slave-worked plantations in the West Indian islands, like Barbados, which did not set up, as a matter

of course, a representative body to deal with problems of legislation and taxation, and the home government never dreamt of interfering with this practice. Already in 1650, the English empire was sharply differentiated from the Spanish, the Dutch, and the French empires by the fact that it consisted of a scattered group of self-governing communities, varying widely in type, but united especially by the common possession of free institutions, and thriving very largely because these institutions enabled local needs to be duly considered and attracted settlers of many types.

(*b*) *The Period of Systematic Colonial Policy*, 1660-1713

The second half of the seventeenth century was a period of organised and systematic imperial policy on the part of both England and France; for both countries now realised that in the profitable field of commerce, at any rate, the Dutch had won a great advantage over them.

France, after many internal troubles and many foreign wars, had at last achieved, under the government of Louis XIV., the boon of firmly established order. She was now beyond all rivalry the greatest of the European states, and her king and his great finance minister, Colbert, resolved to win for her also supremacy in the realms of trade and colonial power. But this was to be done absolutely under the control and

direction of the central government. Until the establishment of the German Empire, there has never been so marked an instance of the centralised organisation of the whole national activity as France presented in this period. The French East India Company was revived under government direction, and began for the first time to be a serious competitor for Indian trade. An attempt was made to conquer Madagascar as a useful base for Eastern enterprises. The sugar industry in the French West Indian islands was scientifically encouraged and developed, though the full results of this work were not apparent until the next century. France began to take an active share in the West African trade in slaves and other commodities. In Canada a new era of prosperity began; the population was rapidly increased by the dispatch of carefully selected parties of emigrants, and the French activity in missionary work and in exploration became bolder than ever. Père Marquette and the Sieur de la Salle traced out the courses of the Ohio and the Mississippi; French trading-stations began to arise among the scattered Indian tribes who alone occupied the vast central plain; and a strong French claim was established to the possession of this vital area, which was not only the most valuable part of the American continent, but would have shut off the English coastal settlements from any possibility of westward expansion. These remarkable explorations led, in 1717, to the foundation of New Orleans at the

mouth of the great river, and the organisation of the colony of Louisiana. But the whole of the intense and systematic imperial activity of the French during this period depended upon the support and direction of government; and when Colbert died in 1683, and soon afterwards all the resources of France were strained by the pressure of two great European wars, the rapid development which Colbert's zeal had brought about was checked for a generation. Centralised administration may produce remarkable immediate results, but it does not encourage natural and steady growth.

Meanwhile the English had awakened to the fact that England had, almost by a series of accidents, become the centre of an empire, and to the necessity of giving to this empire some sort of systematic organisation. It was the statesmen of the Commonwealth who first began to grope after an imperial system. The aspect of the situation which most impressed them was that the enterprising Dutch were reaping most of the trading profits which arose from the creation of the English colonies: it was said that ten Dutch ships called at Barbados for every English ship. To deal with this they passed the Navigation Act of 1651, which provided that the trade of England and the colonies should be carried only in English or colonial ships. They thus gave a logical expression to the policy of imperial trade monopoly which had been in the minds of those who were interested in colonial questions from the outset; and they also opened a period of acute trade

rivalry and war with the Dutch. The first of the Dutch wars, which was waged by the Commonwealth, was a very even struggle, but it secured the success of the Navigation Act. Cromwell, though he hastened to make peace with the Dutch, was a still stronger imperialist than his parliamentary predecessors; he may justly be described as the first of the Jingoes. He demanded compensation from the Dutch for the half-forgotten outrage of Amboyna in 1623. He made a quite unprovoked attack upon the Spanish island of Hispaniola, and though he failed to conquer it, gained a compensation in the seizure of Jamaica (1655). And he insisted upon the obedience of the colonies to the home government with a severity never earlier shown. With him imperial aims may be said to have become, for the first time, one of the ruling ends of the English government.

But it was the reign of Charles II. which saw the definite organisation of a clearly conceived imperial policy; in the history of English imperialism there are few periods more important. The chief statesmen and courtiers of the reign, Prince Rupert, Clarendon, Shaftesbury, Albemarle, were all enthusiasts for the imperial idea. They had a special committee of the Privy Council for Trade and Plantations,[1] and appointed John Locke, the ablest political thinker of the age, to be its secretary. They pushed home the struggle against the maritime ascendancy

[1] It was not till 1696, however, that this Board became permanent.

of the Dutch, and fought two Dutch wars; and though the history-books, influenced by the Whig prejudice against Charles II., always treat these wars as humiliating and disgraceful, while they treat the Dutch war of the Commonwealth as just and glorious, the plain fact is that the first Dutch war of Charles II. led to the conquest of the Dutch North American colony of the New Netherlands (1667), and so bridged the gap between the New England and the southern colonies. They engaged in systematic colonisation, founding the new colony of Carolina to the south of Virginia, while out of their Dutch conquests they organised the colonies of New York, New Jersey, and Delaware; and the end of the reign saw the establishment of the interesting and admirably managed Quaker colony of Pennsylvania. They started the Hudson Bay Company, which engaged in the trade in furs to the north of the French colonies. They systematically encouraged the East India Company, which now began to be more prosperous than at any earlier period, and obtained in Bombay its first territorial possession in India.

More important, they worked out a new colonial policy, which was to remain, in its main features, the accepted British policy down to the loss of the American colonies in 1782. The theory at the base of this policy was that while the mother-country must be responsible for the defence of all the scattered settlements, which in their weakness were exposed to attack from all sources, in

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return she might reasonably expect to be put in possession of definite trade advantages. Hence the Navigation Act of 1660 provided not only that inter-imperial trade should be carried in English or colonial vessels, but that certain 'enumerated articles,' including some of the most important colonial products, should be sent only to England, so that English merchants should have the profits of selling them to other countries, and the English government the proceeds of duties upon them; and another Act provided that imports to the colonies should only come from, or through, England. In other words, England was to be the commercial *entrepôt* of the whole empire; and the regulation of imperial trade as a whole was to belong to the English government and parliament. To the English government also must necessarily fall the conduct of the relations of the empire as a whole with other powers. This commercial system was not, however, purely one-sided. If the colonies were to send their chief products only to England, they were at the same time to have a monopoly, or a marked advantage, in English markets. Tobacco-growing had been for a time a promising industry in England; it was prohibited in order that it might not compete with the colonial product; and differential duties were levied on the competing products of other countries and their colonies. In short, the new policy was one of Imperial Preference; it aimed at turning the empire into an economic unit, of which England

should be the administrative and distributing centre. So far the English policy did not differ in kind from the contemporary colonial policy of other countries, though it left to the colonies a far greater freedom of trade (for example, in the 'non-enumerated articles') than was ever allowed by Spain or France, or by the two great trading companies which controlled the foreign possessions of Holland.

But there is one respect in which the authors of this system differed very widely from the colonial statesmen of other countries. Though they were anxious to organise and consolidate the empire on the basis of a trade system, they had no desire or intention of altering its self-governing character. Every one of the new colonies of this period was provided with the accustomed machinery of representative government: in the case of Carolina, the philosopher, John Locke, was actually invited to draw up a model constitution, and although his scheme was quite unworkable, the fact that he was invited to make it affords a striking proof of the seriousness with which the problems of colonial government were regarded. In several of the West Indian settlements self-governing institutions were organised during these years. In the Frame of Government which Penn set forth on the foundation of Pennsylvania, in 1682, he laid it down that 'any government is free where the laws rule, and where the people are a party to these rules,' and on this basis proceeded to organise

his system. According to this definition all the English colonies were free, and they were almost the only free communities in the world. And though it is true that there was an almost unceasing conflict between the government and the New England colonies, no one who studies the story of this conflict can fail to see that the demands of the New Englanders were highly unreasonable and essentially inconsistent with the maintenance of imperial unity, while the home government was extremely patient and moderate. Above all, almost the most marked feature of the colonial policy of Charles II. was the uniform insistence upon complete religious toleration in the colonies. Every new charter contained a clause securing this vital condition.

It has long been our habit to condemn the old colonial system as it was defined in this period, and to attribute to it the disruption of the empire in the eighteenth century. But the judgment is not a fair one; it is due to those Whig prejudices by which so much of the modern history of England has been distorted. The colonial policy of Shaftesbury and his colleagues was incomparably more enlightened than that of any contemporary government. Moreover, it was probably well designed for the needs of a group of colonies which were still in a state of weakness, still gravely under-peopled and undeveloped. Evil results only began to show themselves in the next age, when the colonies were growing stronger and more independent, and when the self-com-

placent Whigs, instead of revising the system to meet new conditions, actually enlarged and emphasised its most objectionable features.

(c) *The Conflict of French and English*, 1713-1763

While France and England were defining and developing their sharply contrasted imperial systems, the Dutch had fallen into the background, content with the rich dominion which they had already acquired; and the Spanish and Portuguese empires had both fallen into stagnation. The future of the non-European world seemed to depend mainly upon France and England; and it was yet to be determined which of the two systems, centralised autocracy or self-government, would prove the more successful and would play the greater part. Two bodies of ideas so sharply contrasted were bound to come into conflict. In the two great wars between England and Louis XIV. (1688-1713), though the questions at issue were primarily European, the conflict inevitably spread to the colonial field; and in the result France was forced to cede in 1713 the province of Acadia, which had twice before been in English hands, the vast basin of Hudson's Bay, and the island of Newfoundland, to which the fishermen of both nations had resorted, though the English had always claimed it. But these were only preliminaries, and the main conflict was fought out during the half-century following the Peace of Utrecht, 1713-63.

During this half-century Britain was under the rule of the Whig oligarchy, which had no clearly conceived ideas on imperial policy. Under the influence of the mercantile class the Whigs increased the severity of the restrictions on colonial trade, and prohibited the rise of industries likely to compete with those of the mother-country. But under the influence of laziness and timidity, and of the desire *quieta non movere*, they made no attempt seriously to enforce either the new or the old restrictions, and in these circumstances smuggling trade between the New England colonies and the French West Indies, in defiance of the Navigation Act and its companions, grew to such dimensions that any serious interference with it would be felt as a real grievance. The Whigs and their friends later took credit for their neglect. George Grenville, they said, lost the colonies because he read the American dispatches; he would have done much better to leave the dispatches and the colonies alone. But this is a damning apology. If the old colonial system, whose severity, on paper, the Whigs had greatly increased, was no longer workable, it should have been revised; but no Whig showed any sign of a sense that change was necessary. Yet the prevalence of smuggling was not the only proof of the need for change. There was during the period a long succession of disputes between colonial governors and their assemblies, which showed that the restrictions upon their political freedom, as well as those upon their economic

freedom, were beginning to irk the colonists; and that self-government was following its universal and inevitable course, and demanding its own fulfilment. But the Whigs made no sort of attempt to consider the question whether the self-government of the colonies could be increased without impairing the unity of the empire. The single device of their statesmanship was—not to read the dispatches. And, in the meanwhile, no evil results followed, because the loyalty of the colonists was ensured by the imminence of the French danger. The mother-country was still responsible for the provision of defence, though she was largely cheated of the commercial advantages which were to have been its recompense.

After 1713 there was a comparatively long interval of peace between Britain and France, but it was occupied by an acute commercial rivalry, in which, on the whole, the French seemed to be getting the upper hand. Their sugar islands in the West Indies were more productive than the British; their traders were rapidly increasing their hold over the central plain of North America, to the alarm of the British colonists; their intrigues kept alive a perpetual unrest in the recently conquered province of Acadia; and away in India, under the spirited direction of François Dupleix, their East India Company became a more formidable competitor for the Indian trade than it had hitherto been. At length this rivalry flamed out into two wars. The first of these was fought, on both sides, in a

strangely half-hearted and lackadaisical way. But in the second (the Seven Years' War, 1756-63) the British cause, after two years of disaster, fell under the confident and daring leadership of Pitt, which brought a series of unexampled successes. The French flag was almost swept from the seas. The French settlements in Canada were overrun and conquered. With the fall of Quebec it was determined that the system of self-government, and not that of autocracy, should control the destinies of the North American continent; and Britain emerged in 1763 the supreme colonial power of the world.

Meanwhile, during the course of these two wars, and in the interval between them, an extraordinary series of events had opened a new scene for the rivalry of the two great imperial powers. The vast and populous land of India, where the Europeans had hitherto been content to play the part of modest traders, under the protection and control of great native rulers, had suddenly been displayed as a field for the imperial ambitions of the European peoples. Ever since the first appearance of the Dutch, the English, and the French in these regions, Northern India had formed a consolidated empire ruled from Delhi by the great Mogul dynasty; the shadow of its power was also cast over the lesser princes of Southern India. But after 1709, and still more after 1739, the Mogul Empire collapsed, and the whole of India, north and south, rapidly fell into a condition of absolute anarchy. A multitude of

petty rulers, nominal satraps of the powerless Mogul, roving adventurers, or bands of Mahratta raiders, put an end to all order and security; and to protect themselves and maintain their trade the European traders must needs enlist considerable bodies of Indian troops. It had long been proved that a comparatively small number of troops, disciplined in the European fashion, could hold their own against the loose and disorderly mobs who followed the standards of Indian rulers. And it now occurred to the ambitious mind of the Frenchman Dupleix that it should be possible, by the use of this military superiority, to intervene with effect in the increasing strife of the Indian princes, to turn the scale on one side or the other, and to obtain over the princes whose cause he embraced a commanding influence, which would enable him to secure the expulsion of his English rivals, and the establishment of a French trade monopoly based upon political influence.

This daring project was at first triumphantly successful. The English had to follow suit in self-defence, but could not equal the ability of Dupleix. In 1750 a French protégé occupied the most important throne of Southern India at Hyderabad, and was protected and kept loyal by a force of French sepoys under the Marquis de Bussy, whose expenses were met out of the revenues of large provinces (the Northern Sarkars) placed under French administration; while in the Carnatic, the coastal region where all the European traders had their south-eastern head-

quarters, a second French protégé had almost succeeded in crushing his rival, whom the English company supported. But the genius of Clive reversed the situation with dramatic swiftness; the French authorities at home, alarmed at these dangerous adventures, repudiated and recalled Dupleix (1754), and the British power was left to apply the methods which he had invented. When the Seven Years' War broke out (1756), the French, repenting of their earlier decision, sent a substantial force to restore their lost influence in the Carnatic, but the result was complete failure. A British protégé henceforward ruled in the Carnatic; a British force replaced the French at Hyderabad; and the revenues of the Northern Sarkars, formerly assigned for the maintenance of the French force, were handed over to its successor.

Meanwhile in the rich province of Bengal a still more dramatic revolution had taken place. Attacked by the young Nawab, Siraj-uddaula, the British traders at Calcutta had been forced to evacuate that prosperous centre (1756). But Clive, coming up with a fleet and an army from Madras, applied the lessons he had learnt in the Carnatic, set up a rival claimant to the throne of Bengal, and at Plassey (1757) won for his puppet a complete victory. From 1757 onwards the British East India Company was the real master in Bengal, even more completely than in the Carnatic. It had not, in either region, conquered any territory; it had only supported

successfully a claimant to the native throne. The native government, in theory, continued as before; the company, in theory, was its subject and vassal. But in practice these great and rich provinces lay at its mercy, and if it did not yet choose to undertake their government, this was only because it preferred to devote itself to its original business of trade.

Thus by 1763 the British power had achieved a dazzling double triumph. It had destroyed the power of its chief rival both in the East and in the West. It had established the supremacy of the British peoples and of British methods of government throughout the whole continent of North America; and it had entered, blindly and without any conception of what the future was to bring forth, upon the path which was to lead to dominion over the vast continent of India, whose mixed and varied peoples include one-fifth of the human race.

Such was the outcome of the first two periods in the history of European imperialism. It left Central and South America under the stagnant and reactionary government of Spain and Portugal; the eastern coast of North America under the control of groups of self-governing Englishmen; Canada, still inhabited by Frenchmen, under British dominance; Java and the Spice Islands, together with the small settlement of Cape Colony, in the hands of the Dutch; a medley of European settlements in the West Indian islands, and a string of European factories

along the coast of West Africa ; and the beginning of an anomalous British dominion established at two points on the coast of India. But of all the European nations which had taken part in this vast process of expansion, one alone, the British, still retained its vitality and its expansive power.

IV

THE ERA OF REVOLUTION, 1763-1825

'COLONIES are like fruits,' said Turgot, the eighteenth-century French economist and statesman: 'they cling to the mother-tree only until they are ripe.' This generalisation, which represented a view very widely held during that and the next age, seemed to be borne out in the most conclusive way by the events of the sixty years following the Seven Years' War. In 1763 the French had lost almost the whole of the empire which they had toilsomely built up during a century and a half. Within twenty years their triumphant British rivals were forced to recognise the independence of the American colonies, and thus lost the bulk of what may be called the first British Empire. They still retained the recently conquered province of French Canada, but it seemed unlikely that the French Canadians would long be content to live under an alien dominion: if they had not joined in the American Revolution, it was not because they loved the British, but because they hated the Americans. The French Revolutionary wars brought further changes. One result of these wars was that the Dutch lost Cape Colony, Ceylon, and Java,

though Java was restored to them in 1815. A second result was that when Napoleon made himself master of Spain in 1808, the Spanish colonies in Central and South America ceased to be governed from the mother-country; and having tasted the sweets of independence, and still more, the advantages of unrestricted trade, could never again be brought into subordination. By 1825 nothing was left of the vast Spanish Empire save the Canaries, Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippine Islands; nothing was left of the Portuguese Empire save a few decaying posts on the coasts of Africa and India; nothing was left of the Dutch Empire save Java and its dependencies, restored in 1815; nothing was left of the French Empire save a few West Indian islands; and what had been the British American colonies were now the United States, a great power declaring to Europe, through the mouth of President Monroe, that she would resist any attempt of the European powers to restore the old régime in South America.

Of all these colonial revolutions the most striking was that which tore away the American colonies from Britain (1764-82); not only because it led to the creation of one of the great powers of the world, and was to afford the single instance which has yet arisen of a daughter-nation outnumbering its mother-country, but still more because it seemed to prove that not even the grant of extensive powers of self-government would secure the permanent loyalty of colonies.

Indeed, it might be argued that in the case of America self-government was shown to be a dangerous gift; for the American colonies, which alone among European settlements had obtained this supreme endowment, were the first, and indeed the only, European settlements to throw off deliberately their connection with the mother-country. France and Holland lost their colonies by war, and even the Spanish colonies would probably never have thought of severing their relations with Spain but for the anomalous conditions created by the Napoleonic conquest.

The American Revolution is, then, an event unique at once in its causes, its character, and its consequences; and it throws a most important illumination upon some of the problems of imperialism. It cannot be pretended that the revolt of the colonists was due to oppression or to serious misgovernment. The paltry taxes which were its immediate provoking cause would have formed a quite negligible burden upon a very prosperous population; they were to have been spent exclusively within the colonies themselves, and would have been mainly used to meet a part of the cost of colonial defence, the bulk of which was still to be borne by the mother-country. If the colonists had been willing to suggest any other means of raising the required funds, their suggestions would have been eagerly accepted. This was made very plain at several stages in the course of the discussion, but the invitation to

suggest alternative methods of raising money met with no response whatever. The plain fact is that Britain, already heavily loaded with debt, was bearing practically the whole burden of colonial defence, and was much less able than the colonies themselves to endure the strain. As for the long-established restrictions on colonial trade, which in fact though not in form contributed as largely as the proposals of direct taxation to cause the revolt, they were incomparably less severe, even if they had been strictly enforced, than the restrictions imposed upon the trade of other European settlements.

It is equally misleading to attribute the blame of the revolt wholly to George III. and the ministers by whom he was served during the critical years. No doubt it is possible to imagine a more tactful man than George Grenville, a more far-seeing and courageous statesman than Lord North, a less obstinate prince than George III. himself. But it may be doubted whether any change of men would have done more than postpone the inevitable. The great Whig apologists who have dictated the accepted view of British history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have laboured to create the impression that if only Burke, Chatham, and Charles Fox had had the handling of the issue, the tragedy of disruption would have been avoided. But there is no evidence that any of these men, except perhaps Burke, appreciated the magnitude and difficulty of the questions that had been inevitably raised in

1764, and must have been raised whoever had been in power; or that they would have been able to suggest a workable new scheme of colonial government which would have met the difficulty. If they had put forward such a scheme, it would have been wrecked on the resistance of British opinion, which was still dominated by the theories and traditions of the old colonial system; and even if it had overcome this obstacle, it would very likely have been ruined by the captious and litigious spirit to which events had given birth among the colonists, especially in New England.

The root of the matter was that the old colonial system, which had suited well enough the needs of the colonies as they were when it was devised by the statesmen of Charles II.'s reign, was no longer suitable to their condition now that they had become great and prosperous communities of freemen. They enjoyed self-government on a scale more generous than any other communities in the world outside of Britain. No direct taxation had as yet been imposed upon them without their own consent. They made the laws by which their own lives were regulated. They were called upon to pay no tribute to the home government, except the very indirect levy on goods passing through England to or from their ports, and this was nearly balanced by the advantages which they enjoyed in the British market, and far more than balanced by the protection afforded to them by the British fleet. They were not even required to raise troops for the defence of their

own frontiers except of their own free will, and the main burden of defending even their landward frontier was borne by the mother-country. But being British they had the instinct of self-government in their blood and bones, and they found that the control of their own affairs was qualified or limited in two principal ways.

In the first place, the executive and judicial officers who carried out the laws were not appointed by them but by the Crown in England: the colonies were not *responsible* for the administration of their own laws. In the second place, the regulations by which their foreign trade was governed were determined, not by themselves, but by the British parliament: they were not *responsible* for the control of their own traffic with the outside world. It is true that the salaries of the executive officials and the judges depended upon their grant, and that any governor who acted in the teeth of colonial opinion would find his position quite untenable, so that the colonists exercised a real if indirect control over administration. It is true also that they accepted the general principles of the commercial system, and had reaped great benefits from it.

But it is the unfailing instinct of the citizens in a self-governing community to be dissatisfied unless they feel that they have a full and equal share in the control of their own destinies. Denied responsibility, they are apt to become irresponsible; and when all allowance has been made for the stupidities of governors and for the mistakes

of the home authorities, it must be recognised that the thirteen American colonial legislatures often behaved in a very irresponsible way, and were extremely difficult to handle. They refused to vote fixed salaries to their judges in order to make their power felt, simply because the judges were appointed by the Crown, although in doing so they were dangerously undermining judicial independence. They refused in many cases to supply anything like adequate contingents for the war against the French and their Indian allies, partly because each legislature was afraid of being more generous than the others, partly because they could trust to the home government to make good their deficiencies. Yet at the same time they did nothing to check, but rather encouraged, the wholesale smuggling by which the trade regulations were reduced to a nullity, though these regulations were not only accepted in principle by themselves, but afforded the only compensation to the mother-country for the cost of colonial defence. It is as unscientific to blame the colonists and their legislatures for this kind of action, as it is to blame the British statesmen for their proposals. It was the almost inevitable result of the conditions among a free, prosperous, and extremely self-confident people. The denial of responsibility was producing irresponsibility; and even if the Stamp Act and the Tea Duties had never been proposed, this state of things was bound to lead to increasing friction.

It ought to have been obvious, long before Grenville initiated his new policy in 1764, that the colonial system was not working well, and the one circumstance which had prevented serious conflict was the danger which threatened the colonists in the aggressive attitude of the French to the north and west. Since the individual colonies refused to raise adequate forces for their own defence, or to co-operate with one another in a common scheme, they were dependent for their security upon the mother-country. But as soon as the danger was removed, as it was in 1763, this reason for restraint vanished; and although the great majority of the colonists were quite sincerely desirous of retaining their membership of the British commonwealth, the conditions would inevitably have produced a state of intensifying friction, unless the whole colonial system had been drastically reconstructed.

Reconstruction was therefore inevitable in 1764. The Whig policy of simply ignoring the issue and 'not reading the dispatches' could no longer be pursued; it was indeed largely responsible for the mischief. George III. and Grenville deserve the credit of seeing this. But their scheme of reconstruction not unnaturally amounted to little more than a tightening-up of the old system. The trade laws were to be more strictly enforced. The governors and the judges were to be made more independent of the assemblies by being given fixed salaries. The colonists were to bear a larger share of the cost of

defence, which fell so unfairly on the mother-country. If the necessary funds could be raised by means approved by the colonists themselves, well and good; but if not, then they must be raised by the authority of the imperial parliament. For the existing system manifestly could not continue indefinitely, and it was better to have the issue clearly raised, even at the risk of conflict, than to go on merely drifting.

When the colonists (without suggesting any alternative proposals) contented themselves with repudiating the right of parliament to tax them, and proceeded to outrageous insults to the king's authority, and the most open defiance of the trade regulations, indignation grew in Britain. It seemed, to the average Englishman, that the colonists proposed to leave every public burden, even the cost of judges' salaries, on the shoulders of the mother-country, already loaded with a debt which had been largely incurred in defence of the colonies; but to disregard every obligation imposed upon themselves. A system whereunder the colony has all rights and no enforcible duties, the mother-country all duties and no enforcible rights, obviously could not work, and the gentlemen of England cannot be blamed for refusing to accept such a situation. There was no one, either in Britain or in America, capable of grasping the essentials of the problem, which were that, once established, self-government inevitably strives after its own fulfilment; that these British settlers, in whom the British tradition of self-

government had been strengthened by the freedom of a new land, would never be content until they enjoyed a full share in the control of their own affairs; and that although they seemed, even to themselves, to be fighting about legal minutiæ, about the difference between internal and external duties, about the legality of writs of assistance, and so forth, the real issue was the deeper one of the fulfilment of self-government.

Could fully responsible self-government be reconciled with imperial unity? That was the ultimate problem, but it was never fairly faced on either side of the Atlantic. For the mother and her daughters too quickly reached the point of arguing about their legal rights against one another, and when friends begin to argue about their legal rights, the breach of their friendship is at hand. So the dreary argument, which lasted for eleven years (1764-75), led to the still more dreary war, which lasted for seven years (1775-1782); and the only family of free self-governing communities existing in the world was broken up in bitterness. This was indeed a tragedy. For if the great partnership of freedom could have been reorganised on conditions that would have enabled it to hold together, the cause of liberty in the world would have been made infinitely more secure. As it was, the Americans, stuffed with false pride, imagining themselves to be the inventors and monopolists of political liberty, were persuaded to stand entirely aloof from its labours and struggles in the rest of the world, and

to leave the task of extending its influence to the patient prolific mother of nations with whom they had quarrelled, and whom with childlike gusto they continued to revile.

Although the most obvious features of the half-century following the great British triumph of 1763 were the revolt of the American colonies and the apparently universal collapse of the imperialist ambitions of the European nations, a more deeply impressive feature of the period was that, in spite of the tragedy and humiliation of the great disruption, the imperial impetus continued to work potently in Britain, alone among the European nations; and to such effect that at the end of the period she found herself in control of a new empire more extensive than that which she had lost, and far more various in its character. Having failed to solve one great imperial problem, she promptly addressed herself to a whole series of others even more difficult, and for these she was to find more hopeful solutions.

When the American revolt began, the Canadian colonies to the north were in an insecure and unorganised state. On the coast, in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, there was a small British population; but the riverine colony of Canada proper, with its centre at Quebec, was still purely French, and was ruled by martial law. Accustomed to a despotic system, and not yet reconciled to the British supremacy, the French settlers were obviously unready for self-government. But the Quebec Act of 1774, by securing the main-

tenance of the Roman Catholic religion and of French civil law, ensured the loyalty of the French; and this Act is also noteworthy as the first formal expression of willingness to admit or even welcome the existence, within the hospitable limits of the Empire, of a variety of types of civilisation. In the new British Empire there was to be no uniformity of *Kultur*.

The close of the American struggle, however, brought a new problem. Many thousands of exiles from the revolting colonies, willing to sacrifice everything in order to retain their British citizenship, poured over the borders into the Canadian lands. They settled for the first time the rich province of Ontario, greatly increased the population of Nova Scotia, and started the settlement of New Brunswick. To these exiles Britain felt that she owed much, and, despite her own financial distress, expended large sums in providing them with the means to make a good beginning in their new homes. But it was impossible to deny these British settlers, and the emigrants from Britain who soon began to join them, the rights of self-government, to which they were accustomed. Their advent, however, in a hitherto French province, raised the very difficult problem of racial relationship. They might have been used as a means for Anglicising the earlier French settlers and for forcing them into a British mould; it may fairly be said that most European governments would have used them in this way, and many of the settlers would

willingly have fallen in with such a programme. But that would have been out of accord with the genius of the British system, which believes in freedom and variety. Accordingly, by the Act of 1791, the purely French region of Quebec or Lower Canada was separated from the British region of Ontario or Upper Canada, and both districts, as well as the coastal settlements, were endowed with self-governing institutions of the familiar pattern—an elected assembly controlling legislature and taxation, a nominated governor and council directing the executive. Thus within eighteen years of their conquest the French colonists were introduced to self-government. And within nine years of the loss of the American colonies, a new group of self-governing American colonies had been organised. They were sufficiently content with the system to resist with vigour and success an American invasion in 1812.

While the American controversy was proceeding, one of the greatest of British navigators, Captain Cook, was busy with his remarkable explorations. He was the first to survey the archipelagoes of the Pacific; more important, he was the real discoverer of Australia and New Zealand; for though the Dutch explorers had found these lands more than a century earlier, they had never troubled to complete their explorations. Thus a vast new field, eminently suitable for European settlement, was placed at the disposal of Britain. It was utilised with extraordinary promptitude. The loss of the

American colonies had deprived Britain of her chief dumping-ground for convicts. In 1788, six years after the recognition of their independence, she decided to use the new continent for this purpose, and the penal settlement of Botany Bay began (under unfavourable auspices) the colonisation of Australia.

But the most important, and the most amazing, achievement of Britain in this period was the establishment and extension of her empire in India. By 1763 the East India Company had established a controlling influence over the Nawabs of two important regions, Bengal and the Carnatic, and had shown, in a series of struggles, that its control was not to be shaken off. But the company had not annexed any territory, or assumed any responsibility for the government of these rich provinces. Its agents in the East, who were too far from London to be effectively controlled, enjoyed power without responsibility. They were privileged traders, upon whom the native governments dared not impose restrictions, and (as any body of average men would have done under similar circumstances) they gravely abused their position to build up huge fortunes for themselves. During the fifteen years following the battle of Plassey (1757) there is no denying that the political power of the British in India was a mere curse to the native population, and led to the complete disorganisation of the already decrepit native system of government in the provinces affected. It was vain for the

directors at home to scold their servants. There were only two ways out of the difficulty. One was that the company should abandon India, which was not to be expected. The other was that, possessing power, of which it was now impossible to strip themselves, they should assume the responsibility for its exercise, and create for their subjects a just and efficient system of government. But the company would not see this. They had never desired political power, but had drifted into the possession of it in spite of themselves. Their business was that of traders, and they wanted nothing more than to be allowed to mind their business. So the evils arising from power without responsibility continued, and half-hearted attempts to amend them in 1765 and in 1769 only made the conditions worse.

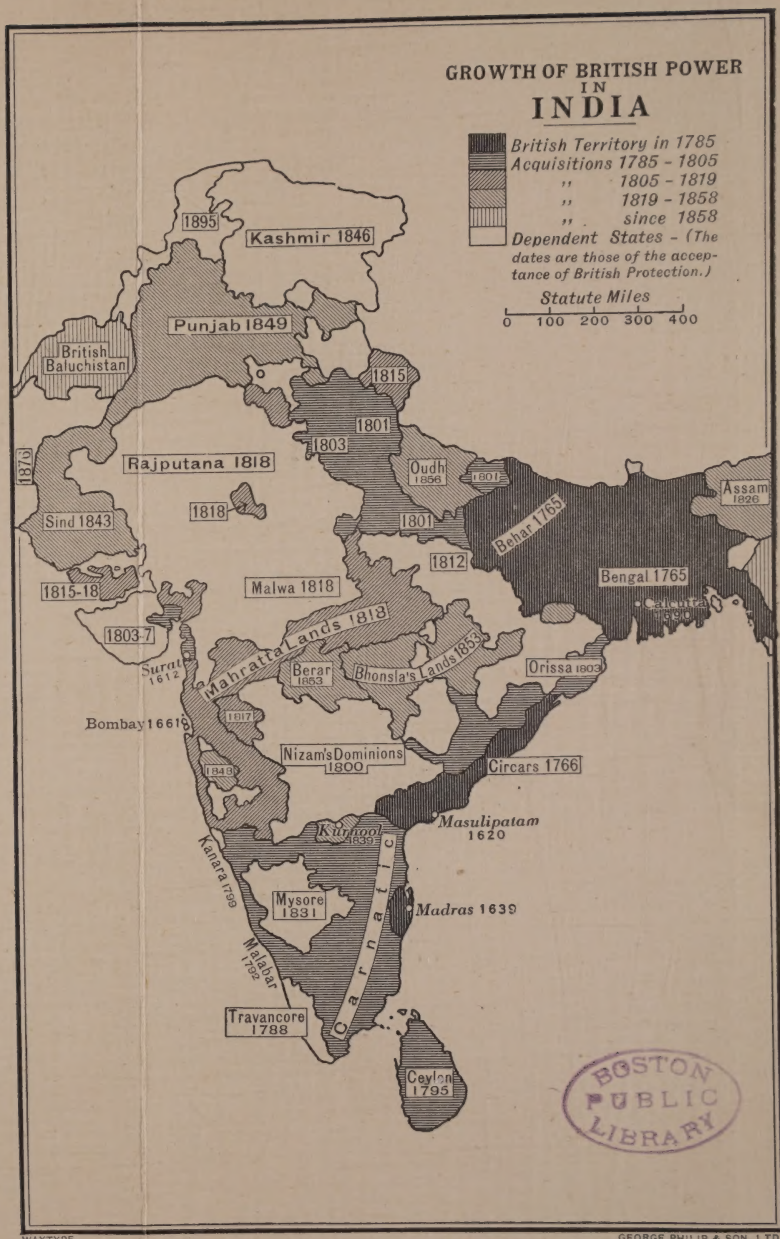
Thus Britain found herself faced with an imperial problem of apparently insuperable difficulty, which reached its most acute stage just at the time when the American trouble was at its height. The British parliament and government intervened, and in 1773 for the first time assumed some responsibility for the affairs of the East India Company. But they did not understand the Indian problem—how, indeed, should they ?—and their first solution was a failure. By a happy fortune, however, the East India Company had conferred the governorship of Bengal (1772) upon the greatest Englishman of the eighteenth century, Warren Hastings. Hastings pensioned off the Nawab, took over direct responsibility for the

government of Bengal, and organised a system of justice which, though far from perfect, established for the first time the Reign of Law in an Indian realm. His firm and straightforward dealings with the other Indian powers still further strengthened the position of the company; and when in the midst of the American war, at a moment when no aid could be expected from Britain, a combination of the most formidable Indian powers, backed by a French fleet, threatened the downfall of the company's authority, Hastings' resourceful and inspiring leadership was equal to every emergency. He not only brought the company with heightened prestige out of the war, but throughout its course no hostile army was ever allowed to cross the frontiers of Bengal. In the midst of the unceasing and desolating wars of India, the territories under direct British rule formed an island of secure peace and of justice. That was Hastings' supreme contribution: it was the foundation upon which arose the fabric of the Indian Empire. Hastings was not a great conqueror or annexer of territory; the only important acquisition made during his régime was effected, in defiance of his protests, by the hostile majority which for a time overrode him in his own council, and which condemned him for ambition. His work was to make the British rule mean security and justice in place of tyranny; and it was because it had come to mean this that it grew, after his time, with extraordinary rapidity.

It was not by the desire of the directors or the home government that it grew. They did everything in their power to check its growth, for they shrank from any increase to their responsibilities. They even prohibited by law all annexations, or the making of alliances with Indian powers.[1] But fate was too strong for them. Even a governor like Lord Cornwallis, a convinced supporter of the policy of non-expansion and non-intervention, found himself forced into war, and compelled to annex territories; because non-intervention was interpreted by the Indian powers as a confession of weakness and an invitation to attack. Non-intervention also gave openings to the French, who, since the outbreak of the Revolution, had revived their old Indian ambitions; and while Bonaparte was engaged in the conquest of Egypt as a half-way house to India (1797), French agents were busy building up a new combination of Indian powers against the company.

This formidable coalition was about to come to a head when, in 1798, there landed in India a second man of genius, sent by fate at the critical moment. In five years, by an amazing series of swiftly successful wars and brilliantly conceived treaties, the Marquess Wellesley broke the power of every independent state in India, except two of the Mahratta princes. The area of British territory was quadrupled; the most important of the Indian princes became vassals of the com-

[1] India Act of 1784.



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pany; and the Great Mogul of Delhi himself, powerless now, but always a symbol of the overlordship of India, passed under British protection. When Wellesley left India in 1805, the East India Company was already the paramount power in India south-east of the Sutlej and the Indus. The Mahratta princes, indeed, still retained a restricted independence, and for an interval the home authorities declined to permit any interference with them, even though they were manifestly giving protection to bands of armed raiders who terrorised and devastated territories which were under British protection. But the time came when the Mahrattas themselves broke the peace. Then their power also was broken; and in 1818 Britain stood forth as the sovereign ruler of India.

This was only sixty years after the battle of Plassey had established British influence, though not British rule, in a single province of India; only a little over thirty years after Warren Hastings returned to England, leaving behind him an empire still almost limited to that single province. There is nothing in history that can be compared with the swiftness of this achievement, which is all the more remarkable when we remember that almost every step in the advance was taken with extreme unwillingness. But the most impressive thing about this astounding fabric of power, which extended over an area equal to half of Europe and inhabited by perhaps one-sixth of the human race, was not the swiftness with

which it was created, but the results which flowed from it. It had begun in corruption and oppression, but it had grown because it had come to stand for justice, order, and peace. In 1818 it could already be claimed for the British rule in India that it had brought to the numerous and conflicting races, religions, and castes of that vast and ancient land, three boons of the highest value: political unity such as they had never known before; security from the hitherto unceasing ravages of internal turbulence and war; and, above all, the supreme gift which the West had to offer to the East, the substitution of an unvarying Reign of Law for the capricious wills of innumerable and shifting despots. This is an achievement unexampled in history. It took place during the age of Revolution, when the external empires of Europe were on all sides falling into ruin; and it passed at the time almost unregarded, because it was overshadowed by the drama of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.

The construction of the Indian Empire would of itself suffice to make an age memorable, but it does not end the catalogue of the achievements of British imperialism in this tremendous period. As a result of the participation of Holland in the war on the side of France, the Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope was occupied by Britain. It was first occupied in 1798, restored for a brief period in 1801, reoccupied in 1806, and finally retained under the treaty settlement of

1815. The Cape was, in fact, the most important acquisition secured to Britain by that treaty; and it is worth noting that while the other great powers who had joined in the final overthrow of Napoleon helped themselves without hesitation to immense and valuable territories, Britain, which had alone maintained the struggle from beginning to end without flagging, actually paid the sum of £2,000,000 to Holland as a compensation for this thinly peopled settlement. She retained it mainly because of its value as a calling-station on the way to India. But it imposed upon her an imperial problem of a very difficult kind. As in Canada, she had to deal here with an alien race of European origin and proud traditions; but this racial problem was accentuated by the further problem of dealing with a preponderant and growing negro population.

It was, then, an astonishing new empire which had grown up round Britain during the period when the world was becoming convinced that colonial empires were not worth acquiring, because they could not last. It was an empire of continents or sub-continents—Canada, Australia, India, South Africa—not to speak of innumerable scattered islands and trading-posts dotted over all the seas of the world, which had either survived from an earlier period, or been acquired in order that they might serve as naval bases. It was spread round the whole globe; it included almost every variety of soil, products, and climate; it was inhabited by peoples of the most varying

types ; it presented an infinite variety of political and racial problems. In 1825 this empire was the only extra-European empire of importance still controlled by any of the historic imperial powers of Western Europe. And at the opening of the nineteenth century, when extra-European empires seemed to have gone out of fashion, the greatest of all imperial questions was the question whether the political capacity of the British peoples, having failed to solve the comparatively simple problem of finding a mode of organisation which could hold together communities so closely akin as those of America and the parent islands, would be capable of achieving any kind of effective organisation for this new astounding fabric, unlike anything that had ever existed in human history.

V

EUROPE AND THE NON-EUROPEAN WORLD 1815-1878

When the European peoples settled down, in 1815, after the long wars of the French Revolution, they found themselves faced by many problems, but there were few Europeans who would have included among these problems the extension of Western civilisation over the as yet unsubjugated portions of the world. Men's hearts were set upon the organisation of permanent peace: that seemed the greatest of all questions, and, for a time, it appeared to have obtained a satisfactory solution with the organisation of the great League of Peace of 1815. But the peace was to be short-lived, because it was threatened by the emergence of a number of other problems of great complexity. First among these stood the problem of nationality: the increasingly clamorous demand of divided or subject peoples for unity and freedom. Alongside of this arose the sister-problem of liberalism: the demand raised from all sides, among peoples who had never known political liberty, for the institutions of self-government which had been proved practicable by the British peoples, and turned into the

object of a fervent belief by the preachings of the French. These two causes were to plunge Europe into many wars, and to vex and divide the peoples of every European country, throughout the period 1815-78. And to add to the complexity, there was growing in intensity during all these years the problem of Industrialism — the transformation of the very bases of life in all civilised communities, and the consequent development of wholly new, and terribly difficult, social issues. Preoccupied with all these questions, the statesmen and the peoples of most European states had no attention to spare for the non-European world. They neglected it all the more readily because the events of the preceding period seemed to demonstrate that colonial empires were not worth the cost and labour necessary for their attainment, since they seemed doomed to fall asunder as soon as they began to be valuable.

Yet the period 1815-78 was to see an extension of European civilisation in the non-European world more remarkable than that of any previous age. The main part in this extension was played by Britain, who found herself left free, without serious rivalry in any part of the globe, to expand and develop the extraordinary empire which she possessed in 1815, and to deal with the bewildering problems which it presented. So marked was the British predominance in colonial activity during this age that it has been called the age of British monopoly,

and so far as trans-oceanic activities were concerned, this phrase very nearly represents the truth. But there were other developments of the period almost as remarkable as the growth and reorganisation of the British Empire; and it will be convenient to survey these in the first instance before turning to the British achievement.

The place of honour, as always in any great story of European civilisation, belongs to France. Undeterred by the loss of her earlier empire, and unexhausted by the strain of the great ordeal through which she had just passed, France began in these years the creation of her second colonial empire, which was to be in many ways more splendid than the first. Within fifteen years of the fall of Napoleon, the French flag was flying in Algiers.

The northern coast of Africa, from the Gulf of Syrtis to the Atlantic, which has been in modern times divided into the three districts of Tunis, Algeria, and Morocco, forms essentially a single region, whose character is determined by the numerous chains of the Atlas Mountains. This region, shut off from the rest of Africa not only by the Atlas but by the most impassable of all geographical barriers, the great Sahara desert, really belongs to Europe rather than to the continent of which it forms a part. Its fertile valleys were once the homes of brilliant civilisations: they were the seat of the Carthaginian Empire, and at a later date they constituted one of the richest and most civilised provinces of the

Roman Empire. Their civilisation was wrecked by that barbarous German tribe, the Vandals, in the fifth century. It was finally overthrown by the Mahomedan conquest at the end of the seventh century, and since that date this once happy region has been practically abandoned to barbarism. During the modern age it was chiefly known as the home of ruthless and destructive pirates, whose chief headquarters were at Algiers, and who owned a merely nominal allegiance to the Sultan of Turkey. Ever since the time of Khair-ed-din Barbarossa, in the early sixteenth century, the powers of Europe have striven in vain to keep the Barbary corsairs in check. Charles V., Philip II., Louis XIV. attacked them with only temporary success: they continued to terrorise the trade of the Mediterranean, to seize trading-ships, to pillage the shores of Spain and Italy, and to carry off thousands of Christians into a cruel slavery; Robinson Crusoe, it may be recalled, was one of their victims. The powers at Vienna endeavoured to concert action against them in 1815. They were attacked by a British fleet in 1816, and by a combined British and French fleet in 1819. But all such temporary measures were insufficient. The only cure for the ill was that the headquarters of the pirate chiefs should be conquered, and brought under civilised government.

This task France was rather reluctantly drawn into undertaking, as the result of a series of insults offered by the pirates to the French flag

between 1827 and 1830. At first the aim of the conquerors was merely to occupy and administer the few ports which formed the chief centres of piracy. But experience showed that this was futile, since it involved endless wars with the unruly clansmen of the interior. Gradually, therefore, the whole of Algeria was systematically conquered and organised. The process took nearly twenty years, and was not completed until 1848. In all the records of European imperialism there has been no conquest more completely justified both by the events which led up to it and by the results which have followed from it. Peace and Law reign throughout a country which had for centuries been given over to anarchy. The wild tribesmen are unlearning the habits of disorder, and being taught to accept the conditions of a civilised life. The great natural resources of the country are being developed as never since the days of Roman rule. No praise can be too high for the work of the French administrators who have achieved these results. And it is worth noting that, alone among the provinces conquered by the European peoples, Algeria has been actually incorporated in the mother-country; it is part of the French Republic, and its elected representatives sit in the French Parliament.

In the nature of things the conquest of Algeria could not stand alone. Algeria is separated by merely artificial lines from Tunis on the east and Morocco on the west, where the old conditions of anarchy still survived; and the establishment

of order and peace in the middle area of this single natural region was difficult, so long as the areas on either side remained in disorder and war. In 1844 France found it necessary to make war upon Morocco because of the support which it had afforded to a rebellious Algerian chief, and this episode illustrated the close connection of the two regions. But the troops were withdrawn as soon as the immediate purpose was served. France had not yet begun to think of extending her dominion over the areas to the east and west of Algeria. That was to be the work of the next period.

Further south in Africa, France retained, as a relic of her older empire, a few posts on the coast of West Africa, notably Senegal. From these her intrepid explorers and traders began to extend their influence, and the dream of a great French empire in Northern Africa began to attract French minds. But the realisation of this dream also belongs to the next period. In the Far East, too, this was a period of beginnings. Ever since 1787—before the Revolution—the French had possessed a foothold on the coast of Annam, from which French missionaries carried on their labours among the peoples of Indo-China. Maltreatment of these missionaries led to a war with Annam in 1858, and in 1862 the extreme south of the Annamese Empire—the province of Cochin-China—was ceded to France. Lastly, the French obtained a foothold in the Pacific, by the annexation of Tahiti and the Marquesas Islands

in 1842, and of New Caledonia in 1855. But in 1878 the French dominions in the non-European world were, apart from Algeria, of slight importance. They were quite insignificant in comparison with the far-spreading realms of her ancient rival, Britain.

On a much greater scale than the expansion of France was the expansion of the already vast Russian Empire during this period. The history of Russia in the nineteenth century is made up of a series of alternations between a régime of comparative liberalism, when the interest of government and people was chiefly turned towards the west, and a régime of reaction, when the government endeavoured to pursue what was called a 'national' or purely Russian policy, and to exclude all Western influences. During these long intervals of reaction, attention was turned eastward; and it was in the reactionary periods, mainly, that the Russian power was rapidly extended in three directions—over the Caucasus, over Central Asia, and in the Far East.

Before this advance, the huge Russian Empire had been (everywhere except on the west, in the region of Poland) marked off by very clearly defined barriers. The Caucasus presented a formidable obstacle between Russia and the Turkish and Persian Empires; the deserts of Central Asia separated her from the Moslem peoples of Khiva, Bokhara and Turkestan; the huge range of the Altai Mountains and the desert of Gobi cut off her thinly peopled province of Eastern Siberia

from the Chinese Empire; while in the remote East her shores verged upon ice-bound and inhospitable seas. Hers was thus an extraordinarily isolated and self-contained empire, except on the side of Europe; and even on the side of Europe she was more inaccessible than any other state, being all but land-locked, and divided from Central Europe by a belt of forests and marshes.

The part she had played in the Napoleonic Wars, and in the events which followed them, had brought her more fully into contact with Europe than she had ever been before. The acquisition of Poland and Finland, which she obtained by the treaties of 1815, had increased this contact, for both of these states were much influenced by Western ideas. Russia had promised that their distinct national existence, and their national institutions, should be preserved; and this seemed to suggest that the Russian Empire might develop into a partnership of nations of varying types, not altogether unlike the form into which the British Empire was developing. But this conception had no attraction for the Russian mind, or at any rate for the Russian government; and the reactionary or pure-Russian school, which strove to exclude all alien influences, was inevitably hostile to it. Hence the period of reaction, and of eastward conquest, saw also the denial of the promises made in 1815. Poland preserved her distinct national organisation, in any full degree, only for fifteen years; even in the

faintest degree, it was preserved for less than fifty years. Finland was allowed a longer grace, but only, perhaps, because she was isolated and had but a small population: her turn for 'Russification' was to come in due course. The exclusion of Western influence, the segregation of Russia from the rest of the world, and the repudiation of varieties of type thus form the main features of the reactionary periods which filled the greater part of this age; and the activity of Russia in eastward expansion was in part intended to forward this policy, by diverting the attention of the Russian people from the west towards the east.

But it is a very striking fact that each of the three main lines of territorial advance followed by Russia in Asia during this period led her to overstep the natural barriers which had made her an isolated and self-dependent empire, brought her into relation with other civilisations, and compelled her to play her part as one of the factors in world-politics.

Russia had begun the conquest of the wild Caucasus region as early as 1802; after a long series of wars, she completed it by the acquisition of the region of Kars in 1878. The mastery of the Caucasus brought her into immediate relation with the Armenian province of the Turkish Empire, which she henceforward threatened from the east as well as from the west. It brought her into contact also with the Persian Empire, over whose policy, from 1835 onwards, she wielded

a growing influence, to the perturbation of Britain. And besides bringing her into far closer relations with the two greatest Mahomedan powers, it gave her a considerable number of Mahomedan subjects, since some of the Caucasus tribes belonged to that faith.

Again, the conquest of Central Asia led her to overstep the barrier of the Kirghiz deserts. The wandering Kirghiz and Turkoman tribes of this barren region lived largely upon the pillage of caravans, and upon raids into neighbouring countries; they disposed of their spoil (which often included Russian captives) mainly in the *bazars* of Bokhara, Khiva, Samarkand and Khokand—Mahomedan Khanates which occupied the more fertile areas in the southern and south-eastern part of the desert region. The attempt to control the Turkoman raiders brought Russia into conflict with these outposts of Islam. Almost the whole of this region was conquered in a long series of campaigns between 1848 and 1876. These conquests (which covered an area 1200 miles from east to west and 600 miles from north to south) made Russia a great Mahomedan power. They also brought her into direct contact with Afghanistan. Russian agents were at work in Afghanistan from 1838 onwards. The shadow of her vast power, looming over Persia and the Persian Gulf on the one hand, and over the mountain frontiers of India on the other, naturally appeared highly menacing to Britain. It was the direct cause of the advance of the British power

from the Indus over North-Western India, until it could rest upon the natural frontier of the mountains—an advance which took place mainly during the years 1839-49. And it formed the chief source of the undying suspicion of Russia which was the dominant note of British foreign policy throughout the period.

Another feature of these conquests was that, taken in conjunction with the French conquest of Algeria and the British conquest of India, they constituted the first serious impact of European civilisation upon the vast realm of Islam. Until now the regions of the Middle East which had been subjugated by the followers of Mahomed had repelled every attack of the West. More definite in its creed, and more exacting in its demands upon the allegiance of its adherents, than any other religion, Mahomedanism had for more than a thousand years been able to resist with extraordinary success the influence of other civilisations; and it had been, from the time of the Crusades onwards, the most formidable opponent of the civilisation of the West. It has only been during the nineteenth century, as a result of Russian, French, and British imperialism, that the resisting power of Islam has begun to give way to the attack of Europe.

The third line of Russian advance was on the Pacific coast, where in the year 1858 she obtained from China the long coastal strip of Manchuria which constitutes the Amur province, with the valuable harbour of Vladivostok. It was an

almost empty land, but its acquisition made Russia a Pacific power, and brought her into very close neighbourhood with China, into whose reserved markets, at the same period, the maritime powers of the West were forcing an entrance. At the same time Russian relations with Japan, which were to have such pregnant consequences, were beginning: in 1875 the Japanese were forced to cede the southern half of the island of Sakhalin, and perhaps we may date from this year the suspicion of Russia which dominated Japanese policy for a long time to come.

Thus, while in Europe Russia was trying to shut herself off from contact with the world, her advances in Asia had brought her at three points into the full stream of world-politics. Her vast empire, though for the most part very thinly peopled, formed beyond all comparison the greatest continuous area ever brought under a single rule, since it amounted to between eight and nine million square miles; and when the next age, the age of rivalry for world-power began, this colossal fabric of power haunted and dominated the imaginations of men.

A demonstration of the growing power of Western civilisation, even more impressive than the expansion of the Russian Empire, was afforded during these years by the opening to Western influence of the ancient, pot-bound empires of the Far East, China and Japan. The opening of China began with the Anglo-Chinese War of 1840, which led to the acquisition of Hong-Kong and

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the opening of a group of treaty ports to European trade. It was carried further by the combined Franco-British war of 1857-58, which was ended by a treaty permitting the free access of European travellers, traders, and missionaries to the interior, and providing for the permanent residence of ambassadors of the signatory powers at the court of Pekin. All the European states rushed to share these privileges, and the Westernising of China had begun. It did not take place rapidly or completely, and it was accompanied by grave disturbances, notably the Taiping rebellion, which was only suppressed by the aid of the British General Gordon, in command of a Chinese army. But though the process was slow, it was fully at work by 1878. The external trade of China, nearly all in European hands, had assumed great proportions. The missionaries and schoolmasters of Europe and America were busily at work in the most populous provinces. Shanghai had become a European city, and one of the great trade-centres of the world. In a lame and incompetent way the Chinese government was attempting to organise its army on the European model, and to create a navy after the European style. Steamboats were plying on the Yang-tse-kiang, and the first few miles of railway were open. Chinese students were beginning to resort to the universities and schools of the West; and although the conservatism of the Chinese mind was very slow to make the plunge, it was already plain that this vast hive of patient, clever, and

industrious men was bound to enter the orbit of Western civilisation.

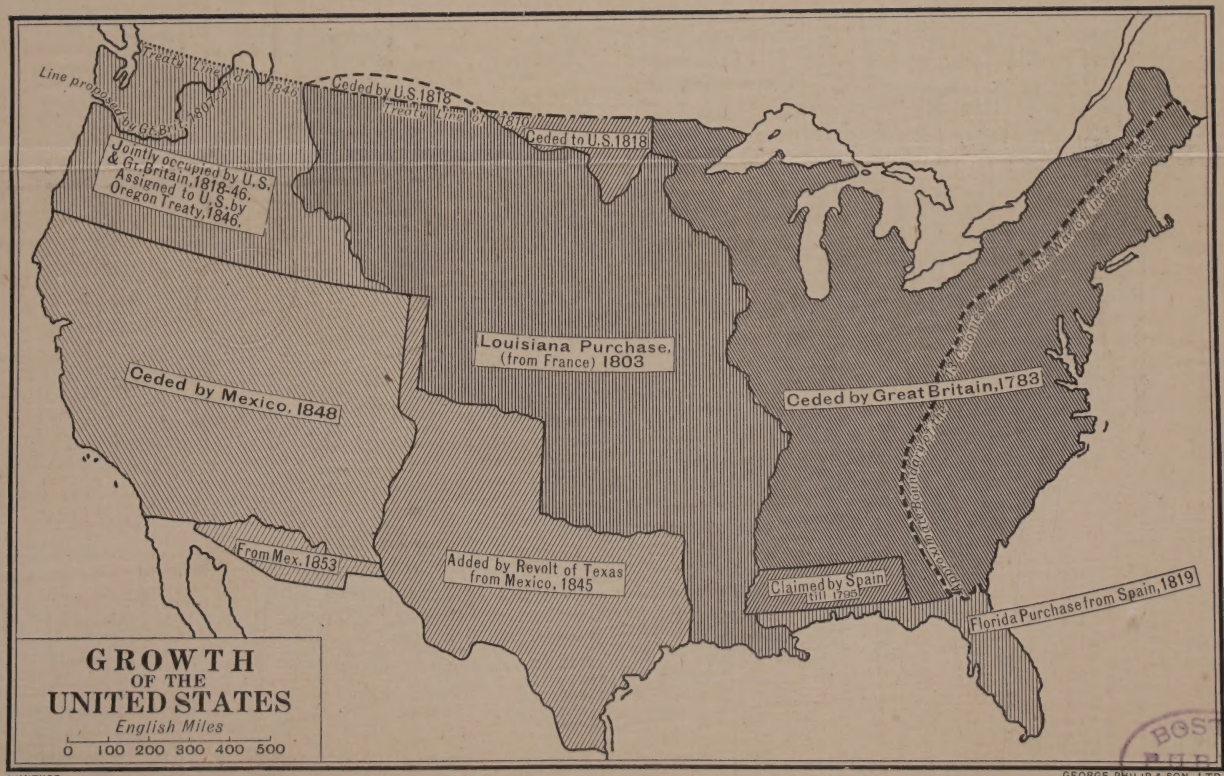
Meanwhile, after a longer and stiffer resistance, Japan had made up her mind to a great change with amazing suddenness and completeness. There had been some preliminary relations with the Western peoples, beginning with the visits of the American Commodore Perry in 1853 and 1854, and a few ports had been opened to European trade. But then came a sudden, violent reaction (1862). The British embassy was attacked; a number of British subjects were murdered; a mixed fleet of British, French, Dutch, and American ships proved the power of Western arms, and Japan began to awaken to the necessity of adopting, in self-defence, the methods of these intrusive foreigners. The story of the internal revolution in Japan, which began in 1866, cannot be told here; enough that it led to the most astounding change in history. Emerging from her age-long isolation and from her contentment with her ancient, unchanging modes of life, Japan realised that the future lay with the restless and progressive civilisation of the West; and with a national resolve to which there is no sort of parallel or analogy in history, decided that she must not wait to be brought under subjection, but must adopt the new methods and ideas for herself, if possible without shedding too much of her ancient traditions. By a deliberate exercise of the will and an extraordinary effort of organisation, she became industrial without

ceasing to be artistic; she adopted parliamentary institutions without abandoning her religious veneration for the person of the Mikado; she borrowed the military methods of the West without losing the chivalrous and fatalist devotion of her warrior-caste; and devised a Western educational system without disturbing the deep orientalism of her mind. It was a transformation almost terrifying, and to any Western quite bewildering, in its deliberation, rapidity, and completeness. Europe long remained unconvinced of its reality. But in 1878 the work was, in its essentials, already achieved, and the one state of non-European origin which has been able calmly to choose what she would accept and what she would reject among the systems and methods of the West, stood ready to play an equal part with the European nations in the later stages of the long imperial struggle.

One last sphere of activity remains to be surveyed before we turn to consider the development of the new British Empire: the expansion of the independent states which had arisen on the ruins of the first colonial empires in the New World. Of the Spanish and Portuguese states of Central and South America it is not necessary to say much. They had established their independence between 1815 and 1825. But the unhappy traditions of the long Spanish ascendancy had rendered them incapable of using freedom well, and Central and South America became the scene of ceaseless and futile revolutions. It was not

until the later years of our period that any large stream of immigration began to flow into these lands from other European countries than Spain and Portugal, and that their vast natural resources began to be developed by the energy and capital of Europe. But by 1878 the more fertile of these states, Argentina, Brazil, and Chili, were being enriched by these means, were becoming highly important elements in the trade-system of the world, and were consequently beginning to achieve a more stable and settled civilisation.

Far more impressive was the almost miraculous expansion which came to the United States during this period. When the United States started upon their career as an independent nation in 1782, their territory was limited to the lands east of the Mississippi, excluding Florida, which was still retained by Spain. Only the eastern margin of this area was at all fully settled; and the population numbered at most 2,000,000, predominantly of British blood. In 1803, by a treaty with Napoleon, the French colony of Louisiana, with vast and ill-defined claims to the territory west of the Mississippi, was purchased from France. Meanwhile the stream of immigrants from the eastern states, and in a less degree from Europe, was pouring over the Alleghany Mountains and occupying the great central plain; and by 1815 the population had risen to almost 9,000,000, still mainly of British stock, though it also included substantial French


Line proposed by Gr. Britain, 1826
Treaty Limit of 1846
Ceded by U.S. 1818
Treaty Limit of 1818
Ceded to U.S. 1818
Jointly occupied by U.S. & Gr. Britain, 1818-46. Assigned to U.S. by Oregon Treaty, 1846.
Louisiana Purchase. (from France) 1803
Ceded by Mexico. 1848
Ceded by Great Britain, 1783
From Mex. 1853
Added by Revolt of Texas from Mexico, 1845
Claimed by Spain till 1795
Florida Purchase from Spain, 1819
GROWTH OF THE UNITED STATES
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and German elements, as well as large numbers of negro slaves. In 1819 Florida was acquired by purchase from Spain. In 1845-48 a revolution in Texas (then part of Mexico), followed by two Mexican wars, led to the annexation of a vast area extending from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific coast, including the paradise of California; while treaties with Britain in 1818 and 1846 determined the northern boundary of the States, and secured their control over the regions of Washington and Oregon.

Thus the imperialist spirit was working as powerfully in the democratic communities of the New World as in the monarchies of Europe. Not content with the possession of vast and almost unpeopled areas, they had spread their dominion from ocean to ocean, and built up an empire less extensive indeed than that of Russia, but even more compact, far richer in resources, and far better suited to be the home of a highly civilised people. Into this enormous area there began to pour a mighty flood of immigration from Europe, as soon as the Napoleonic wars were over. By 1878 the population of the States had risen to about 50,000,000, and was greater than that of any European state save Russia. A new world-state of the first rank had arisen. It was made up of contributions from all the European peoples. Those of British stock, especially the Irish, still predominated throughout this period, but the Germans and the Scandinavians were becoming increasingly numerous, and the Italians, Greeks,

Poles, Czechs, Russian Jews, and other stocks were beginning to form very substantial elements. It was a melting-pot of races, which had to be somehow welded into a nation by the moulding-power of the traditions implanted by the earlier British settlers. On the whole the great experiment was, during this period, singularly successful. The strength of the national sentiment and of the tradition of freedom was very powerfully exhibited in the strain of the great Civil War (1861-65) which led to the emancipation of the negro slaves, thirty years after this step had been taken in the British Empire. And the Civil War produced in Abraham Lincoln a national hero, and an exponent of the national character and ideals, worthy to be set beside Washington. The America of Lincoln manifestly stood for Liberty and Justice, the fundamental ideals of Western civilisation.

But there was one unhappy element in this great moulding tradition of freedom. It was too apt to regard liberty as an American monopoly, as something which the 'effete monarchies' of the Old World not only did not, but could not, understand or share, as something which exempted the fortunate inhabitants of the land of freedom from all responsibility for the benighted remainder of the world, and from the duty of aiding and supporting the progress of liberty outside its own bounds. Liberty came to appear too exclusively the opportunity of developing material prosperity; and the love of liberty

became—not for the best Americans, but for the mass of Americans—a purely self-regarding emotion. The sources of this unhappy and vitiating element of self-complacency in the American tradition were twofold. In the first place, the distance of the Republic from Europe, its economic self-sufficiency, and its apparent security from attack, fostered the idea that America had no obligations to the goddess whose name she had emblazoned on her banner, and whose symbol stands at the entrance to her greatest port, save that of affording a refuge, and the free chance of exploiting or being exploited, to the 'oppressed' refugees from all the 'effete monarchies.' In the second place, the traditional American view of the breach with Britain, which was driven into the national mind by means of school-books, Fourth of July celebrations, and incessant newspaper-writing, represented the great quarrel, not as a dispute in a family of free communities, in which a new and very difficult problem was raised, and in which there were faults on both sides, but as one in which all the right was on one side, as a heroic resistance of free men against wicked and malevolent tyranny. This view has been profoundly modified by the remarkable work of American historical research, which has, during the last generation, transformed the treatment of the American Revolution; but the new and saner view has not, even to-day, made its way into the text-books and the newspapers. Britain, from whom these free men had received all the

political liberties which they enjoyed—Britain, the mother of political liberty in the modern world—was represented as a mere tyrant-power, no whit superior to the other despotisms of the Old World; and this formed an essential element in the tradition by which the mind of the new composite nation was moulded.

Hence arose a very strange result in international politics: a wholly one-sided friendship. Britain has, for a century past, believed that the United States stood for justice and freedom; and therefore, however difficult the relations between the two powers might occasionally become, she has steadfastly refused to consider the possibility of a breach with America, and she has steadily given her support to American policy. All the world has known that an attack on America would bring Britain into the field: the action of the British squadron off the Philippines in 1898, in interposing itself between the threatening German guns and the American fleet, was broadly typical of the British attitude. And it may safely be said that it was only the knowledge of this British attitude, and the strength of the British fleet, which has prevented any challenge to the Monroe Doctrine, even in the exaggerated form which has been given to it by American public opinion. On the other hand, throughout the period, average opinion in America has always been distrustful and contemptuous of Britain, has generally put the most unfavourable construction upon British policy, has wholly failed to grasp the value and

significance of the work which Britain has done in the outer world, and has certainly never given any such backing to Britain as it has always expected, and been able to count upon, from Britain. For American tradition represented Britain as a tyrant-power, and America as the monopolist of liberty. And this conviction—this element of self-complacency and unreality in the American tradition—powerfully contributed to persuade the Americans that they had no share of responsibility for the progress of law and liberty in the non-American world.

At one moment, indeed, almost at the beginning of the period, it appeared as if this narrow outlook was about to be abandoned. The League of Peace of the great European powers of 1815 had, by 1822, developed into a league of despots for the suppression of revolutionary tendencies. They had intervened to crush revolutionary outbreaks in Naples and Piedmont; they had authorised France to enter Spain in order to destroy the democratic system which had been set up in that country in 1820. Britain alone protested against these interventions, claiming that every state ought to be left free to fix its own form of government; and in 1822 Canning had practically withdrawn from the League of Peace, because it was being turned into an engine of oppression. It was notorious that, Spain once subjugated, the monarchs desired to go on to the reconquest of the revolting Spanish colonies in South America. Britain could not undertake a war on the Conti-

nent against all the continental powers combined, but she could prevent their intervention in America, and Canning made it plain that the British fleet would forbid any such action. To strengthen his hands, he suggested to the American ambassador that the United States might take common action in this sense. The result was the famous message of President Monroe to Congress in December 1823, which declared that the United States accepted the doctrine of non-intervention, and that they would resist any attempt on the part of the European monarchs to establish their reactionary system in the New World.

In effect this was a declaration of support for Britain. It was so regarded by Monroe's most influential adviser, Thomas Jefferson. 'Great Britain,' he wrote, 'is the nation which can do us the most harm of any one, or all, on earth, and with her on our side we need not fear the whole world. With her, then, we should the most sedulously cherish a cordial friendship; and nothing would tend more to knit our affection than to be fighting once more side by side in the same cause.' To be fighting side by side with Britain in the same cause—the cause of the secure establishment of freedom in the world—*this* seemed to the Democrat Jefferson an object worth aiming at; and the promise of this seemed to be the main recommendation of the Monroe Doctrine. It was intended as an alliance for the defence of freedom, not as a proclamation of

monopoly; and thus America seemed to be taking her natural place as one of the powers concerned to strengthen law and liberty, not only within her own borders, but throughout the world.

Unfortunately, American opinion has given to the Monroe Doctrine an interpretation it was not originally meant to bear, and has turned it into a haughty declaration that Europe has no concern with American affairs: as if the world of civilisation were not indissolubly one, incapable of being divided into mutually indifferent and water-tight compartments. This distortion of the Monroe Doctrine was mainly due to the influence of that self-regarding view of liberty which sprang from the tradition of distrust for Europe. And the irony of it is that just as, in 1823, it was the fleet of Britain, not the words of Monroe, which prevented the European powers from intervening in South America, so, ever since, it has been the fleet of Britain which has preserved the Monroe Doctrine from challenge, even in the rather arrogant form which it has been made to assume.

America, then, during the period 1815-78, was becoming a vast state wherein freedom and law were enthroned, a huge melting-pot wherein diverse peoples were being partially unified and turned into a new nation under the influence of a powerful tradition of liberty; but owing to a certain defect of generosity and reality in this tradition, the new American nation was being

persuaded that its national interest could be separated from the common interest of civilisation; and that the liberty which it worshipped need mean nothing nobler than freedom to pursue material prosperity.

VI

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE, 1815-1878

MIGHTY as had been the achievements of other lands which have been surveyed in the last section, the main part in the expansion of European civilisation over the world during the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century was played by Britain. For she was engaged in opening out new continents and sub-continents; and she was giving an altogether new significance to the word 'Empire.' There is no section of the history of European imperialism more interesting than the story of the growth and organisation of the heterogeneous and disparate empire with which Britain entered upon the new age.

This development appeared, on the surface, to be quite haphazard, and to be governed by no clearly grasped theories or policy. The period produced in Britain no imperialist statesman of the first rank, nor did imperial questions play a leading part in the deliberations of parliament. In fact, the growth of the British Empire and its organisation were alike spontaneous and unsystematic; their only guide (but it proved to be a good guide) was the spirit of self-government,

existing in every scattered section of the people; and the part played by the colonists themselves, and by the administrative officers in India and elsewhere, was throughout more important than the part played by colonial secretaries, East Indian directors, parliamentarians and publicists at home. For that reason the story is not easily handled in a broad and simple way.

Enjoying almost a monopoly of oversea activity, Britain was free, in most parts of the world, to expand her dominions as she thought fit. Her statesmen, however, were far from desiring further expansion: they rightly felt that the responsibilities already assumed were great enough to tax the resources of any state, however rich and populous. But, try as they would, they could not prevent the inevitable process of expansion. Several causes contributed to produce this result. Perhaps the most important was the unexampled growth of British trade, which during these years dominated the whole world; and the flag is apt to follow trade. A second cause was the pressure of economic distress and the extraordinarily rapid increase of population at home, leading to wholesale emigration; in the early years of the century an extravagantly severe penal code, which inflicted the penalty of death, commonly commuted into transportation, for an incredible number of offences, gave an artificial impetus to this movement. The restless and adventurous spirit of the settlers in huge and unexplored new countries contributed another

motive for expansion. And in some cases, notably in India, political necessity seemed to demand annexations. Over a movement thus stimulated, the home authorities found themselves, with the best will in the world, unable to exercise any effective restraint; and the already colossal British Empire continued to grow. It is no doubt to be regretted that other European nations were not able during this period to take part in the development of the non-European world in a more direct way than by sending emigrants to America or the British lands. But it is quite certain that the growth of British territory is not to be attributed in any degree to the deliberate policy, or to the greed, of the home government, which did everything in its power to check it.

In India the Russian menace seemed to necessitate the adoption of a policy towards the independent states of the North-West which brought an extension of the frontier, between 1839 and 1849, to the great mountain ranges which form the natural boundary of India in this direction; while a succession of intolerable and quite unprovoked aggressions by the Burmese led to a series of wars which resulted in the annexation of very great territories in the east and north-east: Assam, Aracan, and Tenasserim in 1825; Pegu and Rangoon in 1853; finally, in 1885-86, the whole remainder of the Burmese Empire. In North America settlers found their way across the Rocky Mountains or over the Isthmus of Panama into the region of British Columbia,

which was given a distinct colonial organisation in 1858; and the colonisation of the Red River Settlement, 1811-18, which became in 1870 the province of Manitoba, began the development of the great central plain. In South Africa frontier wars with the Kaffirs, and the restless movements of Boer trekkers, brought about an expansion of the limits of Cape Colony, the annexation of Natal, and the temporary annexation of the Orange River Settlement and the Transvaal; but all these additions were most reluctantly accepted; the Orange River Settlement and the Transvaal soon had their independence restored, though the former, at any rate, accepted it unwillingly. In Australia, drafts of new settlers planting themselves at new points led to the organisation of six distinct colonies between 1825 and 1859; and this implied the definite annexation of the whole continent. New Zealand was annexed in 1839, but only because British traders had already established themselves in the islands, were in unhappy relations with the natives, and had to be brought under control.

But it was not the territorial expansion of the British Empire which gave significance to this period in its history, but, in a far higher degree, the new principles of government which were developed during its course. The new colonial policy which gradually shaped itself during this age was so complete a departure from every precedent of the past, and represented so remarkable an experiment in imperial government, that its

sources deserve a careful analysis. It was brought into being by a number of distinct factors and currents of opinion which were at work both in Britain and in the colonies.

In the first place, there existed in Britain, as in other European countries, a large body of opinion which held that all colonies were sure to demand and obtain their independence as soon as they became strong enough to desire it; that as independent states they could be quite as profitable to the mother-country as they could ever be while they remained attached to her, more especially if the parting took place without bitterness; and that the wisest policy for Britain to pursue was therefore to facilitate their development, to place no barrier in the way of the increase of their self-government, and to enable them at the earliest moment to start as free nations on their own account. This was not, indeed, the universal, nor perhaps even the preponderant, attitude in regard to the colonies in the middle of the nineteenth century. But it was pretty common. It appeared in the most unexpected quarters, as when Disraeli said that the colonies were 'millstones about our necks,' or as when *The Times* advocated in a leading article the cession of Canada to the United States, on the ground that annexation to the great Republic was the inevitable destiny of that colony, and that it was much better that it should be carried out in a peaceable and friendly way than after a conflict. It is difficult to-day to realise

that men could ever have entertained such opinions. But they were widely held; and it must at least be obvious that the prevalence of these views is quite inconsistent with the idea that Britain was deliberately following a policy of expansion and annexation in this age. Men who held these opinions (and they were to be found in every party) regarded with resentment and alarm every addition to what seemed to them the useless burdens assumed by the nation, and required to be satisfied that every new annexation of territory was not merely justifiable, but inevitable.

A second factor which contributed to the change of attitude towards the colonies was the growing influence of a new school of economic thought, the school of Adam Smith, Ricardo, and Malthus. Their ideas had begun to affect national policy as early as the twenties, when Huskisson took the first steps on the way to free trade. In the thirties the bulk of the trading and industrial classes had become converts to these ideas, which won their definite victories in the budgets of Sir Robert Peel, 1843-46, and in those of his disciple Gladstone. The essence of this doctrine, as it affected colonial policy, was that the regulation of trade by government, which had been the main object of the old colonial policy, brought no advantages, but only checked its free development. And for a country in the position which Britain then occupied, this was undeniably true; so overwhelming was her preponderance in world-

trade that every current seemed to set in her direction, and the removal of artificial barriers, originally designed to train the current towards her shores, allowed it to follow its natural course. The only considerable opposition to this body of economic doctrine came from those who desired to protect British agriculture; but this motive had (at this period) no bearing upon colonial trade. The triumph of the doctrine of free trade meant that the principal motive which had earlier led to restrictions upon the self-government of the colonies—the desire to secure commercial advantages for the mother-country—was no longer operative. The central idea of the old colonial system was destroyed by the disciples of Adam Smith; and there no longer remained any apparent reason why the mother-country should desire to control the fiscal policy of the colonies.

These were negative forces, leading merely to the abandonment of the older colonial theories. But there were also positive and constructive forces at work. First among them may be noted a new body of definite theory as to the function which colonies ought to play in the general economy of the civilised world. It was held to be their function not (as in the older theory) to afford lucrative opportunities for trade to the mother-country: so far as trade was concerned it seemed to matter little whether a country was a colony or an independent state. But the main object of colonisation was, on this view, the systematic draining-off of the surplus population

of the older lands. This, it was felt, could not safely be left to the operation of mere chance; and one of the great advantages of colonial possessions was that they enabled the country which controlled them to deal in a scientific way with its surplus population, and to prevent the reproduction of unhealthy conditions in the new communities, which was apt to result if emigrants were allowed to drift aimlessly wheresoever chance took them, and received no guidance as to the proper modes of establishing themselves in their new homes. The great apostle of this body of colonial theory was Edward Gibbon Wakefield; and his book, *A View of the Art of Colonisation* (1847), deserves to be noted as one of the classics of the history of imperialism. He did not confine himself to theory, but was tireless in organising practical experiments. They were carried out, in a curious revival of the methods of the seventeenth century, by means of a series of colonising companies which Wakefield promoted. The settlement of South Australia, the first considerable settlement in the North Island of New Zealand, and the two admirably designed and executed settlements of Canterbury and Otago in the South Island of New Zealand, were all examples of his methods: with the exception of the North Island settlement, they were all very successful. Nor were these the only instances of organised and assisted emigration. In 1820 a substantial settlement, financed by government, was made in the eastern part of Cape Colony, in the region of

Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth, and this brought the first considerable body of British inhabitants into South Africa, hitherto almost exclusively Dutch. An unsuccessful plantation at Swan River in West Australia may also be noted. Systematic and scientific colonisation was thus being studied in Britain during this period as never before. In the view of its advocates Britain was the trustee of civilisation for the administration of the most valuable unpeopled regions of the earth, and it was her duty to see that they were skilfully utilised. So high a degree of success attended some of their efforts that it is impossible not to regret that they were not carried further. But they depended upon Crown control of undeveloped lands. With the growth of full self-government in the colonies the exercise of these Crown functions was transferred from the ministry and parliament of Britain to the ministries and parliaments of the colonies; and this transference put an end to the possibility of a centralised organisation and direction of emigration.

A second constructive factor very potently at work during this age was the humanitarian spirit, which had become a powerful factor in British life during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It had received perhaps its most practical expression in the abolition of the slave-trade in 1806, and the campaign against the slave-trade in the rest of the world became an important object of British policy from that

time onwards. Having abolished the slave-trade, the humanitarians proceeded to advocate the complete abolition of negro slavery throughout the British Empire. They won their victory in 1833, when the British parliament declared slavery illegal throughout the Empire, and voted £20,000,000—at a time when British finance was still suffering from the burdens of the Napoleonic War—to purchase from their masters the freedom of all the slaves then existing in the Empire. It was a noble deed, but it was perhaps carried out a little too suddenly, and it led to grave difficulties, especially in the West Indies, whose prosperity was seriously impaired, and in South Africa, where it brought about acute friction with the slave-owning Boer farmers. But it gave evidence of the adoption of a new attitude towards the backward races, hitherto mercilessly exploited by all the imperialist powers. One expression of this attitude had already been afforded by the organisation (1787) of the colony of Sierra Leone, on the West African coast, as a place of refuge for freed slaves desiring to return to the land of their fathers.

It was principally through the activity of missionaries that this new point of view was expressed and cultivated. Organised missionary activity in Britain dates from the end of the eighteenth century, but its range grew with extraordinary rapidity throughout the period. And wherever the missionaries went, they constituted themselves the protectors and advocates of the native

races among whom they worked. Often enough they got themselves into bad odour with the European traders and settlers with whom they came in contact. But through their powerful home organisations they exercised very great influence over public opinion and over government policy. The power of 'Exeter Hall,' where the religious bodies and the missionary societies held their meetings in London, was at its height in the middle of the nineteenth century, and politicians could not afford to disregard it, even if they had desired to do so. This influence, supporting the trend of humanitarian opinion, succeeded in establishing it as one of the principles of British imperial policy that it was the duty of the British government to protect the native races against the exploitation of the European settlers, and to guide them gently into a civilised way of life. It is a sound and noble principle, and it may fairly be said that it has been honestly carried out, so far as the powers of the home government rendered possible. No government in the world controls a greater number or variety of subjects belonging to the backward races than the British; no trading nation has had greater opportunities for the oppressive exploitation of defenceless subjects. Yet the grave abuse of these opportunities has been infrequent. There have been in the history of modern British imperialism sporadic instances of injustice, like the forced labour of Kanakas in the Pacific. But there have been no Congo outrages, no

Putumayo atrocities, no Pequena slave scandals, no merciless slaughter like that of the Hereros in German South-West Africa.

The principle of the protection of backward peoples has, however, sometimes had an unfortunate influence upon colonial policy; and there was no colony in which it exercised a more unhappy effect than South Africa. Here the Boer farmers still retained towards their native neighbours the attitude which had been characteristic of all the European peoples in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: they regarded the negro as a natural inferior, born to servitude. It is not surprising that no love was lost between the Boers and the missionaries, who appeared as the protectors of the negroes, and whose representations turned British opinion violently against the whole Boer community. This was in itself a sufficiently unfortunate result: it lies largely at the base of the prolonged disharmony which divided the two peoples in South Africa. The belief that the Boers could not be trusted to deal fairly with the natives formed, for a long period, the chief reason which urged the British Government to retain their control over the Boers, even when they had trekked away from the Cape (1836) and established themselves beyond the Orange and the Vaal rivers; and the conflict of this motive with the desire to avoid any increase of colonial responsibilities, and with the feeling that if the Boers disliked the British system, they had better be left in freedom to

organise themselves in their own way, accounts for the curious vacillation in the policy of the period on this question. At first the trekkers were left to themselves; then the lands which they had occupied were annexed; then their independence was recognised; and finally, when, at the end of the period, they seemed to be causing a dangerous excitement among the Zulus and other native tribes, the Transvaal was once more annexed; with the result that revolt broke out, and the Majuba campaign had to be fought.

Again, tenderness for the natives led to several curious and not very successful experiments in organisation. The annexation of Natal was long delayed because it was held that this area ought to form a native reserve, and fruitless attempts were made to restrict the settlement of Europeans in this empty and fertile land. An attempt was also made to set up a series of native areas under British protection, from which the white settler was excluded. British Kaffraria, Griqualand East and Griqualand West were examples of this policy, which is still represented, not unsuccessfully, by the great protected area of Basutoland. But, on the whole, these experiments in the handling of the native problem in South Africa did more harm than good. They were unsuccessful mainly because South Africa was a white man's country, into which the most vigorous of the native races, those of the Bantu stock (Kaffirs, Zulus, Matabili, etc.), were more recent immigrants than the white men themselves. Owing

to their warlike character and rapidly growing numbers they constituted for a long time a very formidable danger; and neither the missionaries nor the home authorities sufficiently recognised these facts.

Perhaps the most unhappy result of this friction over the native question, apart from the alienation of Boer and Briton which it produced, was the fact that it was the principal cause of the long delay in establishing self-governing institutions in South Africa. The home government hesitated to give to the colonists full control over their own affairs, because it distrusted the use which they were likely to make of their powers over the natives; even the normal institutions of all British colonies were not established in Cape Colony till 1854, and in Natal till 1883. But although in this case the new attitude towards the backward races led to some unhappy results, the spirit which inspired it was altogether admirable, and its growing strength accounts in part for the real degree of success which has been achieved by British administrators in the government of regions not suited for the settlement of Europeans in large numbers. Indeed, this spirit has come to be one of the outstanding features of modern British imperialism.

It was not only in the treatment of backward races that the humanitarian spirit made itself felt. It was at work also in the government of the highly developed civilisations of India, where, during this period, British power began to be

boldly used to put an end to barbarous or inhumane practices which were supported or tolerated by the religious beliefs or immemorial social usages of India. Such practices as *thagi*, or *meria* sacrifices, or female infanticide, or, above all, *sati*, had been left undisturbed by the earlier rulers of British India, because they feared that interference with them would be resented as an infraction of Indian custom or religion. They were now boldly attacked, and practically abolished, without evil result.

Alongside of this new courage in measures that seemed to be dictated by the moral ideas of the West, there was to be seen growing throughout this period a new temper of respect for Indian civilisation and a desire to study and understand it, and to safeguard its best features. The study of early Indian literature, law, and religious philosophy had indeed been begun in the eighteenth century by Sir William Jones and Nathaniel Halhed, with the ardent encouragement of Warren Hastings. But in this as in other respects Hastings was ahead of the political opinion of his time; the prevalent idea was that the best thing for India would be the introduction, so far as possible, of British methods. This led to the absurdities of the Supreme Court, established in 1773 to administer English law to Indians. It led also to the great blunder of Cornwallis's settlement of the land question in Bengal, which was an attempt to assimilate the Indian land-system to that of England, and resulted in an unhappy weakening

of the village communities, the most healthy features of Indian rural life. In the nineteenth century this attitude was replaced by a spirit of respect for Indian traditions and methods of organisation, and by a desire to retain and strengthen their best features. The new attitude was perhaps to be seen at its best in the work of Mountstuart Elphinstone, a great administrator who was also a profound student of Indian history, and a very sympathetic observer and friend of Indian customs and modes of life. But the same spirit was exemplified by the whole of the remarkable generation of statesmen of whom Elphinstone was one. They established the view that it was the duty of the British power to reorganise India, indeed, but to reorganise it on lines in accordance with its own traditions. Above all, the principle was in this generation very definitely established that India, like other great dependencies, must be administered in the interests of its own people, and not in the interests of the ruling race. That seems to us to-day a platitude. It would not have seemed a platitude in the eighteenth century. And it may safely be said that the enunciation of such a doctrine would have seemed merely absurd in any of the earlier historical empires. In 1833 an official report laid before the British parliament contained these remarkable words: 'It is recognised as an indisputable principle, that the interests of the Native Subjects are to be consulted in preference to those of Europeans, wherever the two come in

competition.' In all the records of imperialism it would be hard to find a parallel to this formal statement of policy by the supreme government of a ruling race. When such a statement could be made, it is manifest that the meaning of the word Empire had undergone a remarkable transformation. No one can read the history of British rule in India during this period without feeling that, in spite of occasional lapses, this was its real spirit.

But the most powerful constructive element in the shaping of the new imperial policy of Britain was the strength of the belief in the idea of self-government, as not only morally desirable but practically efficacious, which was to be perceived at work in the political circles of Britain during this age. Self-government had throughout the modern age been a matter of habit and practice with the British peoples; now it became a matter of theory and belief. And from this resulted a great change of attitude towards the problems of colonial administration. The American problem in the eighteenth century had arisen ultimately out of the demand of the Americans for unqualified and responsible control over their own affairs: the attitude of the Englishman in reply to this demand (though he never clearly analysed it) was, in effect, that self-government was a good and desirable thing, but that on the scale on which the Americans claimed it, it would be fatal to the unity of the Empire, and the unity of the Empire must come first. Faced by

similar problems in the nineteenth century, the Englishman's response generally was that self-government on the fullest scale was the right of all who were fit to exercise it, and the most satisfactory working solution of political problems. Therefore the right must be granted; and the unity of the Empire must take care of itself. No doubt this attitude was more readily adopted because of the widespread belief that in fact the colonies would all sooner or later cut their connection with the mother-country. But it was fully shared by men who did not hold this view, and who believed strongly in the possibility and desirability of maintaining imperial unity. It was shared, for example, by Wakefield, a convinced imperialist if ever there was one, and by that great colonial administrator, Sir George Grey. It was shared by Lord Durham and by Lord John Russell, who were largely responsible for the adoption of the new policy. Their belief and hope was that the common possession of free institutions of kindred types would in fact form the most effective tie between the lands which enjoyed them. This hope obtained an eloquent expression in the speech in which, in 1852, Russell introduced the bill for granting to the Australian colonies self-government on such a scale as amounted almost to independence. It is not true, as is sometimes said, that the self-governing institutions of the colonies were established during this period owing to the indifference of the home authorities, and their readiness to put an end to

the connection. The new policy of these years was deliberately adopted; and although its acceptance by parliament was rendered easier by the prevalence of disbelief in the permanence of the imperial tie, yet, on the part of the responsible men, it was due to far-sighted statesmanship.

The critical test of the new colonial policy, and the most dramatic demonstration of its efficacy, were afforded by Canada, where, during the thirties, the conditions which preceded the revolt of the American colonies were being reproduced with curious exactness. The self-governing institutions established in the Canadian colonies in 1791 very closely resembled those of the American colonies before the revolution: they gave to the representative houses control over taxation and legislation, but neither control over, nor responsibility for, the executive. And the same results were following. Incomplete self-government was striving after its own fulfilment: the denial of responsibility was producing irresponsibility. There was the same unceasing friction between governors and their councils on the one hand, and the representative bodies on the other hand; and the assemblies were showing the same unreasonableness in refusing to meet manifest public obligations. This state of things was becoming steadily more acute in all the colonies, but it was at its worst in the province of Quebec, where the constitutional friction was embittered by a racial conflict, the executive body being British,

while the great majority of the assembly was French; and the conflict was producing a very dangerous alienation between the two peoples. The French colonists had quite forgotten the gratitude they had once felt for the maintenance of their religion and of their social organisation, and there was a strong party among them who were bent upon open revolt, and hoped to be able to establish a little isolated French community upon the St. Lawrence. This party of hotheads got the upper hand, and their agitation culminated in the rebellion of Papineau in 1837. In the other colonies, and especially in Upper Canada, the conditions were almost equally ominous; when Papineau revolted in Quebec, William Mackenzie led a sympathetic rising in Ontario. The situation was quite as alarming as the situation in the American colonies had been in 1775. It is true that the risings were easily put down. But mere repression formed no solution, any more than a British victory in 1775 would have formed a solution of the American question.

Realising this, the Whig government sent out Lord Durham, one of their own number, to report on the whole situation. Durham was one of the most advanced Liberals in Britain, a convinced believer in the virtues of self-government, and he took out with him two of the ablest advocates of scientific colonisation, Edward Gibbon Wakefield and Charles Buller. Durham's administrative work was not a success: his high-handed de-

portation of some of the rebel leaders was strongly condemned, and he was very quickly recalled. But he had had time to study and understand the situation, and he presented a masterly *Report on Canada*, which is one of the classics in the history of British imperialism. His explanation of the unhappy condition of Canadian politics was not (as some were tempted to say) that the colonists had been given too much liberty, but that they had not been given enough. They must be made to feel their responsibility for the working of the laws which they adopted, and for the welfare of the whole community. As for the conflict of races, its only cure was that both should be made to feel their common responsibility for the destinies of the community in which both must remain partners.

Lord Durham's recommendations were fully carried into effect, partly in the Canada Act of 1840, but more especially by a simple instruction issued to governors, that their ministries must henceforward be chosen, in the British fashion, on the ground that they commanded the support of a majority in the elected house; and that the governors themselves must be guided by their advice. A crucial test of this new policy came in 1849, when the ministers and the parliamentary majority proposed to vote compensation for property destroyed in 1837. This to many seemed compensation for rebels, and the indignant loyalists were urgent that the governor, Lord Elgin, should veto it. He firmly declined to do so; and thus gave

an invaluable lesson to both parties. The Canadian people, acting through their representatives, were now responsible for their actions. If they chose to vote for irresponsible and dangerous devices, they must henceforward realise that they must themselves answer for the consequences.

Thus, within a few years of the outbreak of rebellion in two provinces, full power had been entrusted to the rebels themselves. It was a daring policy, only to be justified by a very confident belief in the virtues of self-government. But it was completely and triumphantly successful. Henceforward friction between the Canadian colonies and the mother-country ceased: if there were grounds for complaint in the state of Canadian affairs, the Canadians must now blame their own ministers, and the remedy lay in their own hands. And what was the outcome? Twenty years later the various colonies, once as full of mutual jealousies as the American colonies had been before 1775, began to discuss the possibility of federation. With the cordial approval and co-operation of the home government, they drew up a scheme for the formation of a united Dominion of Canada, including distant British Columbia and the coastal colonies of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island; and the adoption of this scheme, in 1867, turned Canada from a bundle of separate settlements into a great state. To this state the home government later made over the control of all the vast and rich lands of the North-West, and so

the destinies of half a continent passed under its direction. It was a charge, the magnitude and challenge of which could not but bring forth all that there was of statesmanship among the Canadian people; and it has not failed to do so.

One feature of Canadian constitutional development remains to be noted. It might have been expected that the Canadians would have been tempted to follow the political model of their great neighbour the United States; and if their development had been the outcome of friction with the mother-country, no doubt they would have done so. But they preferred to follow the British model. The keynote of the American system is division of power: division between the federal government and the state governments, which form mutual checks upon one another; division between the executive and the legislature, which are independent of one another at once in the states and in the federal government, both being directly elected by popular vote. The keynote of the British system is concentration of responsibility by the subordination of the executive to the legislature. The Canadians adopted the British principle: what had formerly been distinct colonies became, not 'states' but 'provinces,' definitely subordinated to the supreme central government; and whether in the federal or in the provincial system, the control of government by the representative body was finally established. This concord with the British system is a fact of real import. It means that

the political usages of the home-country and the great Dominion are so closely assimilated that political co-operation between them is far easier than it otherwise might be; it increases the possibility of a future link more intimate than that of mere co-operation.

Not less whole-hearted or generous than the treatment of the problems of Canadian government was the treatment of the same problem in Australia. Here, as a matter of course, all the colonies had been endowed, at the earliest possible date, with the familiar system of representative but not responsible government. No such acute friction as had occurred in Canada had yet shown itself, though signs of its development were not lacking. But in 1852 an astonishing step was taken by the British parliament: the various Australian colonies were empowered to elect single-chamber constituent assemblies to decide the forms of government under which they wished to live. They decided in every case to reproduce as nearly as possible the British system: legislatures of two chambers, with ministries responsible to them. Thus, in Australia as in Canada, the daughter-peoples were made to feel the community of their institutions with those of the mother-country, and the possibility of intimate and easy co-operation was increased. Two years later, in 1854, New Zealand was endowed with the same system. Among all the British realms in which the white man was predominant, only South Africa was as yet excluded from this re-

markable development. The reasons for this exclusion we have already noted: its consequences will occupy our attention in later pages.

Very manifestly the empire which was developing on such lines was not an empire in the old sense—a dominion imposed by force upon unwilling subjects. That old word, which has been used in so many senses, was being given a wholly new connotation. It was being made to mean a free partnership of self-governing peoples, held together not by force, but in part by common interests, and in a still higher degree by common sentiment and the possession of the same institutions of liberty.

In the fullest sense, however, this new conception of empire applied only to the group of the great self-governing colonies. There were many other regions, even before 1878, included within the British Empire, though as yet it had not incorporated those vast protectorates over regions peopled by backward races which have been added during the last generation. There were tropical settlements like British Honduras, British Guiana, Sierra Leone, and Cape Coast Castle; there were many West Indian Islands, and scattered possessions like Mauritius and Hong-Kong and Singapore and the Straits Settlements; there were garrison towns or coaling-stations like Gibraltar, Malta, Aden, St. Helena. To none of these were the institutions of full responsible self-government granted. Some of them possessed representative institutions with-

out responsible ministries; in others the governor was assisted by a nominated council, intended to express local opinion, but not elected by the inhabitants; in yet others the governor ruled autocratically. But in all these cases the ultimate control of policy was retained by the home government. And in this general category, as yet, the South African colonies were included. Why were these distinctions drawn? Why did the generation of British statesmen, who had dealt so generously with the demand for self-government in Canada and Australia, stop short and refuse to carry out their principles in these other cases?

It is characteristic of British politics that they are never merely or fully logical, and that even when political doctrines seem to enjoy the most complete ascendancy, they are never put into effect without qualifications or exceptions. The exceptions already named to the establishment of full self-government were due to many and varying causes. In the first place, there was in most of these cases no effective demand for full self-government; and it may safely be asserted that any community in which there is no demand for self-governing institutions is probably not in a condition to work them with effect. Some of these possessions were purely military posts, like Gibraltar and Aden, and were necessarily administered as such. Others were too small and weak to dream of assuming the full privileges. But in the majority of cases one outstanding

common feature will appear on closer analysis. Nearly all these territories were tropical or semi-tropical lands, whose British inhabitants were not permanent settlers, but were present solely for the purposes of trade or other exploitation, while the bulk of the population consisted of backward peoples, whose traditions and civilisation rendered their effective participation in public affairs quite impracticable. In such cases, to have given full political power to the small and generally shifting minority of white men would have been to give scope to many evils; and to have enfranchised, on a mere theory, the mass of the population would have been to produce still worse results. It would have sentenced these communities to the sort of fate which has befallen the beautiful island of Hayti, where the self-government of a population of emancipated negro slaves has brought nothing but anarchy and degradation. In such conditions the steady Reign of Law is the greatest boon that can be given to white settlers and coloured subjects alike; and the final authority is rightly retained by the home government, inspired, as British opinion has long required that it should be, by the principle that the rights of the backward peoples must be safeguarded. Under this system, both law and a real degree of liberty are made possible; whereas under a doctrinaire application of the theory of self-government, both would vanish.

But there remains the vast dominion of India,

which falls neither into the one category nor into the other. Though there are many primitive and backward elements among its vast population, there are also peoples and castes whose members are intellectually capable of meeting on equal terms the members of any of the ruling races of the West. Yet during this age, when self-government on the amplest scale was being extended to the chief regions of the British Empire, India, the greatest dominion of them all, did not obtain the gift of representative institutions even on the most modest scale. Why was this ?

It was not because the ruling race was hostile to the idea, or desired merely to retain its own ascendancy. On the contrary, both in Britain and among the best of the British administrators in India, it was increasingly held that the only ultimate justification for the British power in India would be that under its guidance the Indian peoples should be gradually enabled to govern themselves. As early as 1824, when in Europe sheer reaction was at its height, this view was being strongly urged by one of the greatest of Anglo-Indian administrators, Sir Thomas Munro, a soldier of distinction, then serving as governor of Madras. ' We should look upon India,' he wrote, ' not as a temporary possession, but as one which is to be maintained permanently, until the natives shall have abandoned most of their superstitions and prejudices, and become sufficiently enlightened to frame a regular government for

themselves, and to conduct and preserve it. Whenever such a time shall arrive, it will probably be best for both countries that the British control over India should be gradually withdrawn. That the desirable change contemplated may in some after age be effected in India, there is no cause to despair. Such a change was at one time in Britain itself at least as hopeless as it is here. When we reflect how much the character of nations has always been influenced by that of governments, and that some, once the most cultivated, have sunk into barbarism, while others, formerly the rudest, have attained the highest point of civilisation, we shall see no reason to doubt that if we pursue steadily the proper measures, we shall in time so far improve the character of our Indian subjects as to make them able to govern and protect themselves.'

In other words, self-government was the desirable end to be pursued in India as elsewhere; but in India there were many and grave obstacles to its efficient working, which could only slowly be overcome. In the first place, India is more deeply divided in race, language, and religion than any other region of the world. Nowhere else is there such a medley of peoples of every grade of development, from the almost savage Bhil to the cultivated and high-bred Brahmin or Rajput or Mahomedan chief. There are sharp regional differences, as great as those between the European countries; but cutting across these there are everywhere the rigid and impermeable

distinctions of caste, which have no parallel anywhere else in the world. The experience of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, whose confusion of races is simplicity itself in comparison with the chaos of India, affords a significant demonstration of the fact that parliamentary institutions, if they are established among deeply divided peoples, must almost inevitably be exploited for the purpose of racial ascendancy by the most vigorous or the best-organised elements among the people; and a very ugly tyranny is apt to result, as it has resulted in Austro-Hungary. This consequence would almost certainly follow the establishment of a full representative system in India. In the cities of mediæval Italy, when the conflict of parties became so acute that neither side could expect justice from the other, the practice grew up of electing a *podesta* from some foreign city to act as an impartial arbiter. The British power in India has played the part of a *podesta* in restraining and mediating between the conflicting peoples and religions of India.

But again (and this is even more fundamental), for thousands of years the history of India has been one long story of conquests and tyrannies by successive ruling races. Always Might has been Right, so that the lover of righteousness could only pursue it, like the mediæval ascetic, by cutting himself off from the world, abjuring all social ties, and immolating the flesh in order to live by the spirit. Always Law had been, in the last resort, the Will of the Stronger, not the

decree of impartial justice. Always the master-races, the predatory bands, the ruling castes, had expected to receive, and the mass of the people had been accustomed to give, the most abject submission; and these habits were difficult to overcome. 'In England,' says Sir Thomas Munro, 'the people resist oppression, and it is their spirit which gives efficacy to the law: in India the people rarely resist oppression, and the law intended to secure them from it can therefore derive no aid from themselves. . . . It is in vain to caution them against paying by telling them that the law is on their side, and will support them in refusing to comply with unauthorised demands. All exhortations on this head are thrown away, and after listening to them they will the very next day submit to extortion as quietly as before.' How could representative institutions be expected to work under such conditions? They would have lacked the very foundation upon which alone they can firmly rest: respect for law, and public co-operation in the enforcement of it. Thus the supreme service which the government of India could render to its people was the establishment and maintenance of the Reign of Law, and of the liberty which it shelters. In such conditions representative government would be liable to bring, not liberty, but anarchy and the renewal of lawless oppression.

But although the extension of the representative system to India neither was nor could be attempted in this age, very remarkable advances

were made towards turning India in a real sense into a self-governing country. It ceased to be regarded or treated as a subject dominion existing solely for the advantage of its conquerors. That had always been its fate in all the long centuries of its history; and in the first period of British rule the trading company which had acquired this amazing empire had naturally regarded it as primarily a source of profit. In 1833 the company was forbidden to engage in trade, and the profit-making motive disappeared. The shareholders still continued to receive a fixed dividend out of the Indian revenues, but this may be compared to a fixed debt-charge, an annual payment for capital expended in the past; and it came to an end when the company was abolished in 1858. Apart from this dividend, no sort of tribute was exacted from India by the ruling power. India was not even required to contribute to the upkeep of the navy, which protected her equally with the rest of the Empire, or of the diplomatic service, which was often concerned with her interests. She paid for the small army which guarded her frontiers; but if any part of it was borrowed for service abroad, its whole pay and charges were met by Britain. She paid the salaries and pensions of the handful of British administrators who conducted her government, but this was a very small charge in comparison with the lavish outlay of the native princes whom they had replaced. India had become a self-contained state, whose whole re-

sources were expended exclusively upon her own needs, and expended with the most scrupulous honesty, and under the most elaborate safeguards.

They were expended, moreover, especially during the later part of this period, largely in equipping her with the material apparatus of modern civilisation. Efficient police, great roads, a postal service cheaper than that of any other country, a well-planned railway system, and, above all, a gigantic system of irrigation which brought under cultivation vast regions hitherto desert—these were some of the boons acquired by India during the period. They were rendered possible partly by the economical management of her finances, partly by the liberal expenditure of British capital. Above all, the period saw the beginning of a system of popular education, of which the English language became the main vehicle, because none of the thirty-eight recognised vernacular tongues of India either possessed the necessary literature, or could be used as a medium for instruction in modern science. In 1858 three universities were established; and although their system was ill-devised, under the malign influence of the analogy of London University, a very large and increasing number of young graduates, trained for modern occupations, began to filter into Indian society, and to modify its point of view. All speaking and writing English, and all trained in much the same body of ideas, they possessed a similarity of out-

look and a vehicle of communication such as had never before linked together the various races and castes of India. This large and growing class, educated in some measure in the learning of the West, formed already, at the end of the period, a very important new element in the life of India. They were capable of criticising the work of their government; they were not without standards of comparison by which to measure its achievements; and, aided by the large freedom granted to the press under the British system, they were able to begin the creation of an intelligent public opinion, which was apt, in its first movements, to be ill-guided and rash, but which was nevertheless a healthy development. This forms a real step towards self-government.

The creation of the new class of Western-educated Indians also facilitated another development which the British government definitely aimed at encouraging: the participation of Indians in the conduct of administration in their own land. The Act of 1833 had laid it down as a fundamental principle that 'no native of the said territories . . . shall by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office, or employment.' The great majority of the minor administrative posts had always been held by Indians; but until 1833 it had been held that the maintenance of British supremacy required that the higher offices should be reserved to members of the ruling race. This restriction was now

abolished; but it was not until the development of the educational system had produced a body of sufficiently trained men that the new principle could produce appreciable results; and even then, the deficiencies of an undeveloped system of training, combined with the racial and religious jealousies which the government of India must always keep in mind, imposed limitations upon the rapid increase of the number of Indians holding the higher posts. Still, the principle had been laid down, and was being acted upon. And that also constituted a great step towards self-government. India in 1878 was governed, under the terms of a code of law based upon Indian custom, by a small body of British officials, among whom leading Indians were gradually taking their place, and who worked in detail through an army of minor officials, nearly all of Indian birth, and selected without regard to race or creed. She was a self-contained country whose whole resources were devoted to her own needs. She was prospering to a degree unexampled in her history; she had achieved a political unity never before known to her; she had been given the supreme boon of a just and impartial law, administered without fear or favour; and she had enjoyed a long period of peace, unbroken by any attack from external foes. Here also, as fully as in the self-governing colonies, membership of the British Empire did not mean subjection to the selfish dominion of a master, or the subordination to that master's interests of the vital interests of

the community. It meant the establishment among a vast population of the essential gifts of Western civilisation, rational law, and the liberty which exists under its shelter.

The period of practical British monopoly, 1815-1878, had thus brought about a very remarkable transformation in the character of the British Empire. It had greatly increased in extent, and by every test of area, population, and natural resources, it was beyond comparison the greatest power that had ever existed in the world. But its organisation was of an extreme laxity; it possessed no real common government; and its principal members were united rather by a community of institutions and ideas than by any formal ties. Moreover, it presented a more amazing diversity of racial types, of religions, and of grades of civilisation, than any other political fabric which had existed in history. Its development had assuredly brought about a very great expansion of the ideas of Western civilisation over the face of the globe, and, above all, a remarkable diffusion of the institutions of political liberty. But it remained to be proved whether this loosely compacted bundle of states possessed any real unity, or would be capable of standing any severe strain. The majority of observers, both in Britain itself and throughout the world, would have been inclined, in 1878, to give a negative answer to these questions.

VII

THE ERA OF THE WORLD-STATES, 1878-1900

THE Congress of Berlin in 1878 marks the close of the era of nationalist revolutions and wars in Europe. By the same date all the European states had found a more or less permanent solution for their constitutional problems. With equal definiteness this year may be said to mark the opening of a new era in the history of European imperialism; an era of eager competition for the control of the still unoccupied regions of the world, in which the concerns of the remotest countries suddenly became matters of supreme moment to all European powers, and the peace of the world was endangered by questions arising in China or Siam, in Morocco or the Soudan or the islands of the Pacific.

For when the peoples of Western and Central Europe, no longer engrossed by the problems of Nationalism and Liberalism, cast their eyes over the world, lo! the scale of things seemed to have changed. Just as, in the fifteenth century, civilisation had suddenly passed from the stage of the city-state or the feudal principality to the stage of the great nation-state, so now, while the European peoples were still struggling to realise

their nationhood, civilisation seemed to have stolen a march upon them, and to have advanced once more, this time into the stage of the world-state. For to the east of the European nations lay the vast Russian Empire, stretching from Central Europe across Asia to the Pacific; and in the west the great American Republic extended from ocean to ocean, across three thousand miles of territory; and between these and around them spread the British Empire, sprawling over the whole face of the globe, on every sea and in every continent. In contrast with these giant empires, the nation-states of Europe felt themselves out of scale, just as the Italian cities in the sixteenth century must have felt themselves out of scale in comparison with the new nation-states of Spain and France. The indifference of Europe to the outer world, and her disbelief in the value of oversea possessions, died out, and was replaced by an eager resolve to achieve the new standard of the world-state before it was too late.

Simultaneously another motive was at work, which tended in the same direction. Until the seventies it had seemed as if the dream of Cobden might come true, and all Europe adopt the policy of free trade. But the greater European states had by 1878 reversed this tendency, and, largely in the hope of combating the overwhelming mercantile and industrial supremacy of Britain, had adopted the methods of high protection. The protectionist policy led them to

desire control over markets, and over the sources of supply of raw materials. It is true that all the areas directly ruled by the British government were as freely open to French, German, and Italian as to British merchants; but that was not enough. The desire for monopoly is implicit in the protectionist creed, and constituted a second reason for acquiring colonies.

And there was a third motive, though its force was not as yet fully felt. Europe had entered upon the era of huge national armies; the example of Prussia, and the rancours which had been created by her policy, had set all the nations arming themselves. They had begun to measure their strength by their available man-power, and the desire to increase the reserve of military manhood formed a motive to colonisation, in two ways. In the first place, the surplus manhood of a nation was lost to it if it was allowed to pass under an alien flag by emigration; and the very numerous emigrants of Germany, Austro-Hungary, and Italy had mostly gone to swell the population either of the United States or of the British colonies. These states, more especially Germany, which attached more weight than any other state to the amount of its available 'cannon-fodder,' began to aspire after the possession of colonies of their own, where their emigrants would continue to be subject to the obligations of service. In the second place, conquered subjects even of backward races might be made useful for the purposes of war. So militarism

was added to commercialism and to national pride as a motive driving the European nations into a new period of imperial rivalry.

When this new period of rivalry began, not much of the globe had escaped the dominating influence of the Western peoples. There were the Turkish and Persian Empires, but both had already been the fields of rivalry, especially between Russia and Britain, and it seemed likely, in 1878, that both would long remain undisturbed, protected by this rivalry. China might present a field for trading activity, but scarcely yet for annexation. Parts of the Indo-Chinese peninsula, some of the greater islands in the Malay Archipelago, and some of the scattered archipelagoes of the Pacific lay open to exploitation, and duly received it; but these were remote areas, wherein it was impossible to build up great consolidated empires. The only large region of the world which was still for the most part unoccupied was the continent of Africa, which lay invitingly near to Europe. It was here, accordingly, that the first great rush took place, and the partition of Africa was the first sign of the new imperial enthusiasm of Europe.

It is a curious fact that the continent whose outline was the first, outside of Europe itself, to be fully mapped out by the European peoples, was actually the last to be effectively brought under the influence of European civilisation. The reason is that the coasts of Africa are for the most part inhospitable; its vast interior plateau

is almost everywhere shut off either by belts of desert land, or by swampy and malarious regions along the coast; and even its great rivers do not readily tempt the explorer inland, because their course is generally interrupted by falls or rapids quite near their mouths, where they descend from the interior plateau to the coastal plain. Hence eight generations of European mariners had circumnavigated the continent without seriously attempting to penetrate its central mass; and apart from the Anglo-Dutch settlements at the southern extremity, the French empire in Algeria in the extreme north, a few trading centres along the Guinea coast, and a few decaying Portuguese stations on the west and the east, the whole continent remained available for European exploitation in 1878.

What trade was carried on was mainly in the hands of British merchants. Over the greater part of the continent only the British power was known to the native tribes and chieftains, many of whom had begged to be taken under British protection, and had been refused. During the two generations before 1878 the interior of the continent had begun to be known; but except in the north and north-west, where French explorers, and a few Germans, had been active, this work had been mainly done by British travellers. Most of the great names of African exploration, indeed—Livingstone, Burton, Speke, Baker, Cameron, and the Anglo-American Stanley—were British names. This afforded, of course, no

reason why a monopoly of the continent should be claimed for Britain, already so richly endowed. But it at least gave Britain a right to a voice in its disposal. And it made clear one fact which differentiates the settlement of Africa from that of any other region of the non-European world: that it was not a gradual, but rather a very sudden and unprepared achievement; and that it was based in most cases not upon the claims established by work already done for the extension of civilisation, but simply upon the assertion that extra-European empire was the due of the European peoples, merely because they were civilised and powerful. Especially was this the case with the empire which Germany carved out in Africa during the course of the next generation. In a degree unparalleled in the history of European imperialism, the German colonial empire was the result of force and of design, not of a gradual evolution. It was not the product of German enterprise outside of Europe, for, owing to the conditions of her history, Germany had hitherto taken no direct part in the expansion of Europe; it was the product of Germany's dominating position in Europe, and the expression of her resolve to build up an external empire by the same means which she had employed to create this position. To say this is not, of course, to condemn the German form of imperialism or its results; but it does indicate an instructive contrast between it and the other forms which had preceded it.

It is convenient to treat separately two distinct regions of Africa: the northern coast, which essentially belonged to the Mediterranean world, and—separated from this coast by the vast belt of deserts which runs across Northern Africa from the Atlantic to the Red Sea—the main mass of the continent. On the northern coast, the main forces were the two oldest of the imperial powers, Britain and France. In 1881 France, extending eastwards from Algiers, established a protectorate over Tunis, where she has since carried out a wonderful work of civilisation. In 1882 the momentous British occupation of Egypt began; it will be discussed elsewhere. There now remained only two regions of the northern coast under native control—Morocco in the far west, and Tripoli between Egypt and Tunis.

Both the British occupation of Egypt and the French protectorate over Tunis provided remarkable illustrations of the way in which imperial activities now reacted upon European politics. The occupation of Egypt brought Britain into very delicate relations with all the other powers, and especially with France. The French occupation of Tunis was connected in the most direct way with the political situation in Europe.

The principal motive of the French in this extension of their empire was undoubtedly to find some compensation for the blow to national pride which had been inflicted by the Franco-German War of 1870-71, and by the loss of

Alsace-Lorraine. They were encouraged by the withdrawal of objections on the part of Britain, and still more by the definite support of Bismarck, who made an opportunity, at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, to express to the French representative his admiration of the work France had already done in Algiers, and to promise the support of Germany if she should extend her sphere of action. But it was no mere disinterested enthusiasm for the extension of civilisation which moved Bismarck to this course. As always, he had ulterior motives. He hoped that France might forget her dreams of *revanche* in the successes of colonial enterprise. Still more, he hoped that if France should occupy Tunis, Italy, which was looking yearningly towards that province—separated by a mere strip of sea from her own territory—would be driven into the arms of Germany. This calculation was fully justified in the event: Italy became a member of the Triple Alliance in 1882 as a direct consequence of the French occupation of Tunis. Finally, Bismarck hoped that French colonial activity would produce friction between France and Britain; and here again his expectations were realised: for five-and-twenty years to come France and Britain were always on bad terms, and more than once on the verge of war. Thus colonial rivalry had a direct reaction upon the European situation, and this was the aspect of it which most interested Bismarck. He was, as he said, 'no colony man'; he shared the earlier view that

oversea possessions were of little value to a nation. European ascendancy was the aim of his policy, and, left to himself, he would have used colonial questions only as a means of strengthening Germany by sowing dissensions among her rivals. But the view of the younger generation in Germany was widely different from Bismarck's, and he found himself forced to take part in the scramble for what remained of Africa, and to give his support to the strenuous activities of the agents sent out to create claims in various parts of the continent by two German colonial societies.

The first warning of the great scramble was given in 1876, when Leopold II., King of the Belgians, summoned to Brussels an informal conference of representatives of a number of powers, and launched an International African Association, whose original aim seems to have been to place the exploration and settlement of Africa upon an international basis. But the futility of this idea was soon displayed when, in 1878, H. M. Stanley returned from his great exploration of the Congo River, and gave the world some idea of the riches of the interior. During the following years all Africa was overrun with a swarm of agents representing various powers — French, German, Belgian, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and British—all eagerly signing treaties with innumerable native princes, who were not always aware of the significance of the documents they were induced to adopt. A

conference held at Berlin in 1884-85 recognised practically all the arrangements made up to that date, and gave international sanction to the establishment of the Congo Free State, under the personal rule of King Leopold II. It was something of a triumph that the settlement should have been arrived at with so little friction. During the following fifteen years the partition of the continent was completed by a series of special agreements among the various powers concerned.

Meanwhile there was equal activity in the other available regions. The French possessions in Cochin China were extended into a protectorate over the whole of Annam and Tonquin, which was not established without a good deal of troublesome fighting. The Germans were busy planting and fostering their influence in the Turkish Empire, and annexing the north-eastern part of New Guinea and the neighbouring Bismarck Archipelago, together with the scattered archipelagoes of tiny islands further north. Britain, under pressure from Australia and New Zealand, took her share in the Pacific, where hitherto she had possessed almost a monopoly of influence, and added to her numerous existing possessions, among others, the valuable Fiji group, which she had more than once, at an earlier date, refused to take under her protection. Even the United States joined in the Pacific competition, annexing Hawaii in 1898, and dividing the Samoan group with Germany in 1899. The spirit of imperialism had indeed captured America. In 1895 the

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secretary of state actually declared, in connection with a dispute between Britain and Venezuela, that 'the United States is practically sovereign on this continent' (meaning both North and South America), 'and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition': an imperialist claim more gigantic than had ever been put forward by any of the 'effete monarchies.' When, in 1898, the States were drawn (by the same mixture of interested and philanthropic motives which have influenced other peoples) into a war with Spain, the result was the annexation of Porto Rico, which lay close at hand, and of the great archipelago of the Philippines, which lay on the other side of the Pacific, in close proximity to the Pacific possessions of Germany. There is no kind of distinction between the action of the United States in the Philippines, and the action of other imperialist powers, except that the United States had to fight a war of three years' duration to persuade the Filipinos to accept the new régime. Even Japan, the youngest recruit to the rank of great powers, entered upon the imperialist competition when, in 1895, after a victory over China, she annexed Formosa and the Pescadores Islands, and would have annexed also the Liao-tung peninsula on the mainland but for the prohibition of Russia, France, and Germany. The break-up of China seemed now to be at hand. Russia began to secure her hold over Northern Manchuria, and seized Port Arthur; France gained concessions on the southern border;

Germany seized Kiao-chau; Britain obtained a lease of Wei-hai-wei; and as the century drew to its close, the various powers were arguing over spheres of influence in China. They were interrupted by the Boxer Rising of 1900, which in the event contributed to check the process, and to give China a chance of saving herself.

Thus all the great powers of the world had equally joined in the race to obtain control over those portions of the earth's surface which remained unallotted. By the opening of the twentieth century the only habitable portions of the earth's surface which were not directly subject to the control of Western civilisation were the anarchic realm of Morocco, the Turkish and Persian Empires, and the desolate region of Tibet; and Turkey was falling gradually under the influence of Germany, Persia under that of Russia and Britain, and even remote Tibet was soon to admit a sort of vague British suzerainty. Practically European civilisation had completed the domination of the world; and the interests of the great powers were so intertwined and intermingled in every part of the globe that the balance of power among them had become as precarious as was the European balance in the eighteenth century. The era of the world-powers had very definitely opened.

It will be worth while to survey, in summary outline, the character and dimensions of the new empires which had emerged as a result of this quarter of a century of eager competition. First

among them, in extent and importance, stood the new empire of France. It covered a total area of 5,000,000 square miles; and in this regard ranked third in order, coming after the British and the Russian empires. It had been the result of a century's strenuous labour, and included some fragments surviving from the earlier French empire. But overwhelmingly the greater part of this dominion had been acquired during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. A very large proportion of its huge area, however, was almost worthless; for it included practically the whole of the Sahara. It fell into three great blocks. First came the empire of Northern Africa, extending continuously from the Atlantic to the valley of the Nile, and from Algiers to the mouth of the Congo, but broken by a number of large coastal *enclaves* held by Britain, Germany, and Spain. Here an inestimable work of civilisation was being rapidly achieved; a work which was seen at its best in the highly developed regions of Algeria and Tunis. Next came the great and fertile island of Madagascar, which Colbert had tried and failed to win in the seventeenth century, but which had been conquered between 1885 and 1895. Lastly, there was the substantial and prosperous Eastern empire of French Indo-China — Annam and Tonquin—the beginnings of which dated back to the eighteenth century. A few inconsiderable islands in the Pacific and the West Indies, and the small province of French Guiana on the north coast of South America, completed the list. For

the most part a recent and rapid creation, the French empire had nevertheless been raised, by a people experienced in the handling of backward races, upon comparatively ancient foundations; and it had been acquired by untiring enterprise, and at the cost of many wars.

Next may be named the curious dominion of the Congo Free State, occupying the rich heart of the African continent. Nominally it belonged to no European power, but was a recognised neutral territory. In practice it was treated as the personal estate of the Belgian king, Leopold II.; and it is he who must be held responsible at the bar of posterity for the iniquities which disgraced the name of European civilisation in the exploitation of this region. When Leopold went to his judgment, in 1908, the Congo passed under the control of the Belgian government and parliament, and an immediate improvement began.

The least successful of the new empires established before 1900 was that of Italy. Disappointed of Tunis, Italy had endeavoured to find compensation in Eritrea, on the Red Sea, and in Somaliland, the coastal region running southwards from the opening of that sea. But these hot and barren lands were in themselves of little value; and it was in the fertile mountain-country of Abyssinia behind that Italy had hoped to find her advantage. In the Massowa campaign (1887), however, her troops were severely punished by the Abyssinians; and although Abyssinia submitted to a nominal suzerainty

which was recognised by the European powers, the power of Italy in this region has remained unprofitable and ineffective.

The most remarkable, in many respects, of all these suddenly acquired empires, was the German. For it was practically all obtained, without fighting or even serious friction, within a period of three years; it had cost incomparably less trouble than any other European power had ever had to face in the organisation of extra-European possessions; and it fell almost wholly within regions where, until its acquisition, Germany had been practically without any material interests. In every case British trade had previously been far more active than German in these regions; yet although the protectionist policy of Germany threatened to eradicate all rival interests, no serious difficulties were raised: the British prime minister publicly declared that if Germany wished to acquire colonies, her co-operation in the work of civilisation would be welcomed. This easily won empire was indeed relatively small, being not much over 1,000,000 square miles, little more than one-fifth of the French dominions. But it was five times as large as Germany itself, and it consisted of territories which were, on the whole, very much richer than those ruled by France. The comparative smallness of the area was indeed due to the fact that Germany was actually the last to enter the race: she took no steps to acquire territory, she showed no desire to acquire it, before 1882; if she had chosen to begin ten

years earlier, as she might easily have done, or if she had shown any great activity in exploring or missionary work, without a doubt she could have obtained a much larger share of African soil.

These rich dominions afforded to their new masters useful supplies of raw materials, which were capable of almost indefinite expansion. They included, in East Africa, and to a less degree in South-West Africa, areas well suited for white settlement; but German emigrants, despite every encouragement, firmly refused to settle in them. An elaborately scientific system of administration, such as might be expected from the German bureaucracy, was devised for the use of the colonies; officials and soldiers have from the beginning formed a larger proportion of their white population than in any other European possessions; and, as a consequence, not one of them, except the little West African district of Togoland, has ever been able to meet its own expenses. Over-administration has its defects even in an old and well-ordered country; it is fatal to the development of a raw and new one. Nor did the Germans show much skill or sympathy in the handling of their subject populations; the uniformed official with his book of rules only bewilders primitive folk, and arouses their resentment. They had frequent trouble with the native population of East Africa; and in South-West Africa were drawn into a lingering and cruel war with the Hereros, which has fortunately had no parallel for sheer ferocity, in all

the annals of European imperialism, since Pizarro's slaughter of the Incas.

But the acquisition of blocks of territory in Africa, New Guinea, and the Pacific, however easily made, was not enough to satisfy the aspirations of Germany after world-power. It was evident from the first, in the writings of her colonial enthusiasts, that she regarded these first acquisitions merely as a beginning, as bases for future conquests; which, since the whole world was now portioned out, could only be made at the expense of her neighbours. Filled with pride in her own achievements, believing herself to be beyond all rivalry the greatest nation in the world, destined to be the world's leader and mistress, it was not to be expected that she should accept a second place in the imperial sphere, or allow herself to be excluded from the first rank among the world-states. She had entered late into the field, by no fault of her own, and found all the most desirable regions of the earth already occupied. But if room could not be found for her by peaceful means, there were always available the means whereby she had created for herself the leading position in Europe, the well-tried methods of blood and iron, force and fraud. Germany must become a world-power; if not by peaceful means, then by the use of her Strong Sword. If she could not achieve the rank of a world-power, she seemed to be sentenced to the same sort of fate as had befallen Holland or Denmark; she might be ever

so prosperous, as these little states were, but she would be dwarfed and reduced to a secondary rank by the powers which surrounded her, by the states which had risen out of the rank of nations and into the rank of world-states. But this German world-state was not to be the result of a slow or natural growth, like the Russian, the American, or the British world-states. It was to be carved out in a generation by the strong will, efficient organisation, and military might of the government.

It was quite natural, and even inevitable, that a nation with the history of the German nation, with its ruling ideas, and with its apparently well-tried confidence in the power of its government to achieve its ends by force, should accept such a programme as this; and the great activity which was shown by various leagues in the propagation of these ideas won an easy victory over public opinion. The date when this programme captured the government of Germany, and became the national policy, can be quite clearly fixed: it was in 1890, when Bismarck, the 'no-colony man,' interested merely in European problems, was driven from power, and the supreme direction of national affairs fell into the hands of the Emperor William II. An impressionable, domineering, and magniloquent prince, inflated by the hereditary self-assurance of the Hohenzollerns, and sharing to the full the modern German belief in German superiority and in Germany's imperial destiny, William II. became

in a real sense the spokesman and leader of an almost insanely megalomaniac but terribly formidable nation.

The history of German imperial ambitions since 1890 falls into two main sections. During the first, which may be said to extend to the turn of the century, Germany and her rulers and pamphleteers are to be observed feeling for openings in this direction and that.

They hoped that something suitably grandiose might yet be erected in Africa, on the foundations already laid: if the Belgian Congo could somehow be acquired, and if the Portuguese would agree to sell their large territories on the east and west coasts, a great German Empire of Tropical Africa would stretch from ocean to ocean. This vision has not yet been abandoned: it is the principal theme of a pamphlet, *Our Future Colonial Work*, by Paul Rohrbach, perhaps the leading spokesman of the German colonial school, which was published since the outbreak of war.

Again, there seemed to be hope in South Africa, where the strained relations between Britain and the Boer republics were full of promise. Were not the Boers to all intents and purposes German? And German South-West Africa formed a convenient base for operations in this region: it was accordingly equipped with a carefully designed system of strategic railways. The situation became more and more promising during the nineties, when the relations between

the British government and the Transvaal were becoming more and more difficult, and when Kruger was laying up stores of munitions purchased from Germany with the funds raised by the taxation of the Uitlanders. The South African War ruined these hopes for the time being, but, as the Great War has shown, did not shatter them altogether.

Again, South America offered a very attractive field. There were many thousands of German settlers, especially in Southern Brazil: so many that they might hope to gain a preponderant influence. The Pan-German League devoted all its zeal to keeping alive the patriotism of these exiled Germans; especially they were provided with schools and books and newspapers to help them to maintain their distinct existence. But the 'Monroe Doctrine' of the Americans, with its declaration against any interference in the affairs of American states by European countries, stood in the way of direct annexation. Though the Emperor William has anxiously cultivated the Americans, he has never made any secret of his intense disapprobation of the Monroe Doctrine, and has even attacked it in a public speech in the presence of Americans. And indeed it seemed hard that lands so smiling as those of the South American states should be left under inefficient government, and only half developed, when Germany was pining for the opportunity of organising them. This dream also was never quite abandoned, but it had to be put on one side.

Perhaps Germany might have been ready to see how far she could go with America: she has since, with complete success, ventured to go a very long way without having to deal with anything more serious than Notes, and America, without an army or a very large fleet, could not, perhaps, have intervened effectively in South America. But there was good reason to suppose (as episodes during the Spanish-American War had suggested) that the British fleet might have to be reckoned with, and a burglarious expedition to South America with that formidable watch-dog at large and unmuzzled was an uninviting prospect.

Again, there were possibilities in the Far East, where, as we have seen, the ancient Empire of China seemed to be breaking up. When Japan showed an inclination to take advantage of this situation, and after a successful war in 1895 proposed to annex Liao-tung, Germany eagerly joined with Russia and France in crying 'Hands off!' and in declaring her devoted attachment to the integrity of the Chinese Empire. One cannot but remember the declarations of Frederick the Great and his successor in favour of the liberties of Poland, which they partitioned. It is notorious that Germany egged on Russia to annex the very territory which Japan had been forbidden to touch, and thus to bring on a conflict which must necessarily weaken one or other of these powers. What is certain is that in 1897 Germany illustrated the strength of her devotion to the

integrity of China by seizing Kiao-chau, one of the most important strategic points on the Chinese coast. But though a considerable trade-development followed from this, no empire was to be acquired. The Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902, whose main object was the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Far East, formed a serious obstacle. But for it, perhaps Germany might have fished profitably in Eastern waters during the Russo-Japanese War. Once more the British fleet loomed up as a barrier.

Yet another dream, constantly referred to by the pamphleteers, but never brought to overt expression by the government, was the dream that the rich empire of the Dutch in the Malay Archipelago might and ought to fall to Germany. Holland herself, according to all the political ethnologists of the Pan-German League, ought to be, by every racial test, part of the German Empire; and if so, her colonial dominions must follow the destiny of the mother-country. But this was a prospect to be talked about, not to be worked for openly. Its realisation could only follow a successful European war. Yet, like the rest of these grandiose visions, there seems no reason to believe that this has been abandoned.

But a more immediately practicable field of operations was to be found in the Turkish Empire, a huge and rich area, some of whose territories—Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Syria—were once among the most prosperous regions in the world, but which was now grossly misgoverned by a decrepit

and incompetent state. The special advantage of concentrating upon this field was, that if the Austrian Empire could be turned into an obedient vassal (and events have proved that this was a comparatively easy task) and if the fractious little states of the Balkans could be subjugated, as Austria was eager that they should, a German dominion over Turkey would bring into being a practically continuous economic empire extending from the North Sea to the Persian Gulf—with India lying invitingly beyond. This programme has been quite seriously and systematically pursued by the German government ever since 1890, or perhaps we should say ever since the Emperor's first visit to Abdul Hamid in 1889. It has been brought very near to success. It is one of the declared aims, and perhaps the most cherished aim, of Germany in the Great War which she has forced on. Abstractly regarded, a German dominion over the wasted and misgoverned lands of the Turkish Empire would have meant a real advance of civilisation; and though it would certainly arouse the unresting hostility of Russia, whom it would debar for ever from the open sea, in itself it would be no more unjustifiable than the British dominion over Egypt or over India. There would, therefore, have been no valid reason why Britain or other disinterested powers should have objected to this process, but for two things. In the first place, there was the well-grounded suspicion that success in this project would only be a prelude to aggressions on a greater scale,

and would only mean the doubling of the warlike resources of a state which aimed not merely at an equality of power with its neighbours, but at supremacy over them. In the second place, the most fundamental iniquity of this great project was that it involved the ruin or the subordination of the little nationalities of the Balkans, which were just struggling into freedom: the ruin of some, the subordination of others. We have seen the scheme in operation, and we now know what it involved.

But neither the great Berlin-Bagdad project, nor any of the other dreams and visions upon which we have touched, had been definitely put into operation during the decade 1890-1900. Germany was as yet feeling the way, preparing the ground, and meanwhile building up her resources, both military and commercial. Perhaps the main result which emerged from the tentative experiments of these years was that at every point the worst obstacle that seemed to stand in her way was the sprawling British Empire and the too-powerful British fleet. The conviction began to become clearer to the German mind that the overthrow of this fat and top-heavy colossus was the necessary preliminary to the creation of the German world-state.

This was a doctrine which had long been preached by the chief political mentor of modern Germany, Treitschke, who died in 1896. He was never tired of declaring that Britain was a decadent and degenerate state, that her empire

was an unreal empire, and that it would collapse before the first serious attack. It must, indeed, collapse, because it formed the great obstacle in the way of German world-power. It would break up because it was not based upon force, because it lacked organisation, because it was a medley of disconnected and discordant fragments. That it should ever have come into being was one of the paradoxes of history; for it was manifestly not due to straightforward brute force, like the German Empire; and the German mind could not understand a state which did not rest upon power, and had not been built up, like Prussia, by the deliberate and purposive action of government, but which had grown almost at haphazard, through the spontaneous activity of free and self-governing citizens. Treitschke and his disciples could only explain the paradox by assuming that since it had not been built by force, it must have been built by low cunning; and they invented the theory that British statesmen had for centuries pursued an undeviating and Machiavellian policy of keeping the more virile states of Europe at cross-purposes with one another by means of the cunning device called the Balance of Power, while behind the backs of these tricked and child-like nations Britain was meanly snapping up all the most desirable regions of the earth. According to this view it was in some mysterious way Britain's fault that France and Germany were not the best of friends, and that Russia was being steadily alienated from Germany. But the day

of reckoning would come when these mean devices would be unmasked, and the pampered, selfish, overgrown colossus would find herself faced by hard-trained and finely tempered Germany, clad in her shining armour. Then, at the first shock, oppressed India would revolt; and the Dutch of South Africa would welcome their German liberators; and the great colonies, to which out of sheer cowardice Britain had granted a degree of independence that no virile state would ever have permitted to its vassals, would shake off the last shreds of subordination; and the ramshackle British Empire would fall to pieces; and the effete and decadent islanders, trusting to their contemptible little army of mercenaries, would have to admit defeat; and Germany would emerge triumphant, free to pursue all her great schemes, and to create a lasting world-power, based upon Force and System, not upon sentimentalities about freedom and justice.

These ideas, already preached by Treitschke, were becoming more and more prevalent in the nineties. They began definitely to get the upper hand, and to influence or even control national policy, in the last years of the century, when the creation of the German navy was begun by the Navy Acts of 1898 and 1900, and when the Emperor announced that the future of Germany lay upon the water, and that hers must be the admiralty of the Atlantic. They can be seen in their final development very plainly expounded in Bernhardi's notorious book. Already, in the

opening years of the twentieth century, Britain was the supreme enemy, and German officers were toasting The Day when the effete and bloated tyrant of the seas should fall, pierced by their sharp swords. Germany had made her choice: it was to be *Weltmacht oder Niedergang*, World-power or Downfall. The twentieth century should decide. The twentieth century is deciding.

Britain herself was extraordinarily slow to awaken to this menace. As late as 1898 Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was urging the desirability of a great alliance of Britain, Germany, and America to maintain the peace of the world; and the imperialist statesman, Cecil Rhodes, when he devised his plan for turning Oxford into the breeding-ground of British youth from all the free nations of the Empire, found a place in his scheme also for picked German and American youths. The famous telegram of the Kaiser to President Kruger in 1896 caused only a passing sensation. The first real illumination came with the extraordinary display of German venom against Britain aroused by the South African War, and with the ominous doubling of the German naval programme adopted during the course of that war, in 1900. But even this made no very profound impression. The majority of the British people declined to believe that 'a great and friendly nation,' or even its rulers, could deliberately enter upon a scheme of such unbridled ambition and of such unprovoked aggressiveness.

VIII

THE BRITISH EMPIRE AMID THE WORLD-POWERS, 1878-1914

MEANWHILE the British Empire, throughout the period of rivalry for world-power which began in 1878, had continued to grow in extent, and to undergo a steady change in its character and organisation.

In the partition of Africa, Britain, in spite of the already immense extent of her domains, obtained an astonishingly large share. The protectorates of British East Africa, Uganda, Nigeria, Nyasaland, and Somaliland gave her nearly 25,000,000 new negro subjects, and these, added to her older settlements of Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast, whose area was now extended, outnumbered the whole population of the French African empire. For the first time, in these vast protectorates, Britain found herself faced with the task of ruling huge areas peopled exclusively by backward races, and not suited to the habitation of white men. But besides these tropical territories she acquired control over two African regions so important that they deserve separate treatment: Egypt, on the one hand,

and the various extensions of her South African territories on the other. When the partition of Africa was completed, the total share of Britain amounted to 3,500,000 square miles, with a population of over 50,000,000 souls, and it included the best regions of the continent: the British Empire, in Africa alone, was more than three times as large as the colonial empire of Germany, which was almost limited to Africa.

It may well be asked why an empire already so large should have taken also the giant's share of the last continent available for division among the powers of Europe. The answer is threefold. In the first place, during the period 1815-78 British influence and trade had been established in almost every part of Africa save the central interior, and no power had such definite relations with various native tribes, many of which desired to come under the protectorate of a power with whom the protection of nation rights and customs was an established principle. Even in the regions annexed by Germany, and, in a less degree, in some of those annexed by France, British interests had been greater than those of their new masters. In the second place, Britain was the only country which already possessed in Africa colonies inhabited by enterprising European settlers, and the activity of these settlers played a considerable part in the extension of the British African dominions. And in the third place, since the continental powers had adopted the policy of fiscal protection, the annexation of a region by

any of them meant that the trade of other nations would be more or less completely excluded from it: the annexation of a territory by Britain meant that it would be open freely and on equal terms to the trade of all nations. Incorporation in the British Empire was in fact the only practical method whereby open markets could be preserved for the whole civilised world; and for this reason the trading interests in Britain, faced by the prospect of exclusion from large areas with which they had carried on traffic, were naturally anxious that as much territory as possible should be brought under British supremacy, in order that it might remain open to their trade.

It is the main justification for British annexations that they opened and developed new markets for all the world, instead of closing them; and it was this fact chiefly which made the acquisition of such vast areas tolerable to the other trading powers. The extension of the British Empire was thus actually a benefit to all the non-imperial states, especially to such active trading countries as Italy, Holland, Scandinavia, or America. If at any time Britain should endeavour to follow the same policy as her rivals, and to reserve for her own merchants the trade of the immense areas which have been brought under her control, nothing is more certain than that the world would protest, and protest with reason, against the exorbitant and disproportionate share which has fallen to her. Only so long as British control

means the open door for all the world will the immense extent of these acquisitions continue to be accepted without protest by the rest of the world. As things are, Germany may perhaps not unreasonably feel that the disproportionate share of the world controlled by Britain is a grievance to herself; but no other nation can possibly desire to see German substituted for British rule.

The establishment of British control over Egypt was due to the most curious chain of unforeseen and unexpected events which even the records of the British Empire contain. Nominally a part of the Turkish Empire, Egypt had been in fact a practically independent state, paying only a small fixed tribute to the Sultan, ever since the remarkable Albanian adventurer, Mehemet Ali, had established himself as its Pasha in the confusion following the French occupation (1806). Mehemet Ali had been an extraordinarily enterprising prince. He had created a formidable army, had conquered the great desert province of the Soudan and founded its capital, Khartoum, and had nearly succeeded in overthrowing the Turkish Empire and establishing his own power in its stead: during the period 1825-40 he had played a leading rôle in European politics. Though quite illiterate, he had posed as the introducer of Western civilisation into Egypt; but his grandiose and expensive policy had imposed terrible burdens upon the *fellahin* (peasantry), and the heavy taxation

which was necessary to maintain his armies and the spurious civilisation of his capital was only raised by cruel oppressions.

The tradition of lavish expenditure, met by grinding the peasantry, was accentuated by Mehemet's successors. It inevitably impoverished the country. Large loans were raised in the West, to meet increasing deficits; and the European creditors in course of time found it necessary to insist that specific revenues should be ear-marked as a security for their interest, and to claim powers of supervision over finance. The construction of the Suez Canal (opened 1869), which was due to the enterprise of the French, promised to bring increased prosperity to Egypt; but in the meanwhile it involved an immense outlay. At the beginning of our period Egypt was already on the verge of bankruptcy, and the Khedive was compelled to sell his holding of Suez Canal shares, which were shrewdly acquired for Britain by Disraeli.

But financial chaos was not the only evil from which Egypt suffered. There was administrative chaos also, and this was not diminished by the special jurisdictions which had been allowed to the various groups of Europeans settled in the country. The army, unpaid and undisciplined, was ready to revolt; and above all, the helpless mass of the peasantry were reduced to the last degree of penury, and exposed to the merciless and arbitrary severity of the officials, who fleeced them of their property under the lash. All the

trading nations were affected by this state of anarchy on an important centre of trade; all the creditors of the Egyptian debt observed it with alarm. But the two powers most concerned were France and Britain, which between them held most of the debt, and conducted most of the foreign trade, of Egypt; while to Britain Egypt had become supremely important, since it now controlled the main avenue of approach to India.

When a successful military revolt, led by Arabi Pasha, threatened to complete the disorganisation of the country (1882), France and Britain decided that they ought to intervene to restore order, the other powers all agreeing. But at the last moment France withdrew, and the task was undertaken by Britain single-handed. In a short campaign Arabi was overthrown; and now Britain had to address herself to the task of reconstructing the political and economic organisation of Egypt. It was her hope and intention that the work should be done as rapidly as possible, in order that she might be able to withdraw from a difficult and thankless task, which brought her into very delicate relations with the other powers interested in Egypt. But withdrawal was not easy. The task of reorganisation proved to be a much larger and more complicated one than had been anticipated; and it was greatly increased when the strange wave of religious fanaticism aroused by the preaching of the Mahdi swept over the Soudan, raised a great upheaval, and

led to the destruction of the Egyptian armies of occupation. Britain had now to decide whether the revolting province should be reconquered or abandoned. Reconquest could not be effected by the utterly disorganised Egyptian army; if it was to be attempted, it must be by means of British troops. But this would not only mean a profitless expenditure, it would also indefinitely prolong the British occupation, which Britain was desirous of bringing to an end at the earliest possible moment.

The romantic hero, Gordon, was therefore sent to Khartoum to carry out the withdrawal from the Soudan of all the remaining Egyptian garrisons. On his arrival he came to the conclusion that the position was not untenable, and took no steps to evacuate. There was much dangerous delay and vacillation; and in the end Gordon was besieged in Khartoum, and killed by the bands of the Mahdi, before a relief force could reach him. But this triumph of Mahdism increased its menace to Egypt. The country could not be left to its own resources until this peril had been removed, or until the Egyptian army had been fully reorganised. So the occupation prolonged itself, year after year.

The situation was, in fact, utterly anomalous. Egypt was a province of Turkey, ruled by a semi-independent Khedive. Britain's chief agent in the country was in form only in the position of a diplomatic representative. But the very existence of the country depended upon the

British army of occupation, and upon the work of the British officers who were reconstructing the Egyptian army. And its hope of future stability depended upon the work of the British administrators, financiers, jurists, and engineers who were labouring to set its affairs in order. These officials, with Sir Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer) at their head, had an extraordinarily difficult task to perform. Their relations with the native government, which they constantly had to overrule, were difficult enough. But besides this, they had to deal with the agents of the other European powers, who, as representing the European creditors of the Egyptian debt, had the right to interfere in practically all financial questions, and could make any logical financial reorganisation, and any free use of the country's financial resources for the restoration of its prosperity, all but impossible.

Yet in the space of a very few years an amazing work of restoration and reorganisation was achieved. Financial stability was re-established, while at the same time taxation was reduced. The forced labour which had been exacted from the peasantry was abolished; they were no longer robbed of their property under the lash; they obtained a secure tenure in their land; and they found that its productive power was increased, by means of great schemes of irrigation. An impartial system of justice was organised—for the first time in all the long history of Egypt since the fall of the Roman Empire. The army was

remodelled by British officers. Schools of lower and higher grade were established in large numbers. In short, Egypt began to assume the aspect of a prosperous and well-organised modern community. And all this was the work, in the main, of some fifteen years.

Meanwhile in the Soudan triumphant barbarism had produced an appalling state of things. It is impossible to exaggerate the hideousness of the régime of Mahdism. A ferocious tyranny terrorised and reduced to desolation the whole of the upper basin of the Nile; and the population shrank from 12,000,000 to 2,000,000. One of the evil consequences of this régime was that it prevented a scientific treatment of the flow of the Nile, on which the very life of Egypt depended. Scientific irrigation had already worked wonders in increasing the productivity of Egypt, but to complete this work, and to secure avoidance of the famines which follow any deficiency in the Nile-flow, it was necessary to deal with the upper waters of the great river. On this ground, and in order to remove the danger of a return of barbarism, which was threatened by frequent Mahdist attacks, and finally in order to rescue captives who were enduring terrible sufferings in the hands of the Mahdi, it appeared that the reconquest of the Soudan must be undertaken as the inevitable sequel to the reorganisation of Egypt. It was achieved, with a wonderful efficiency which made the name of Kitchener famous, in the campaigns of 1899-1900. The re-

conquered province was nominally placed under the joint administration of Britain and Egypt; but in fact the very remarkable work of civilisation which was carried out in it during the years preceding the Great War was wholly directed by British agents and officers.

The occupation of the Soudan necessitated a prolongation of the British occupation of Egypt. But, indeed, such a prolongation was in any case inevitable; for the beneficial reforms in justice, administration, finance, and the organisation of the country's resources, which had been effected in half a generation, required to be carefully watched and nursed until they should be securely rooted: to a certainty they would have collapsed if the guardianship of Britain had been suddenly and completely withdrawn. The growing prosperity of Egypt, however, and still more the diffusion of Western education among its people, has naturally brought into existence a nationalist party, who resent what they feel to be a foreign dominance in their country, and aspire after the institutions of Western self-government. But it has to be noted that the classes among whom this movement has sprung up are not the classes who form the bulk of the population of Egypt—the *fellahin*, who from the time of the Pharaohs downwards have been exploited and oppressed by every successive conqueror who has imposed his rule on the country. This class, which has profited more than any other from the British régime, which has, under that régime, known for

the first time justice, freedom from tyranny, and the opportunity of enjoying a fair share of the fruits of its own labour, is as yet unvocal. Accustomed through centuries to submission, accepting good or bad seasons, just or unjust masters, as the gods may send them, the *fellah* has not yet had time even to begin to have thoughts or opinions about his place in society and his right to a share in the control of his own destinies; and if the rule which has endeavoured to nurture him into prosperity and self-reliance were withdrawn, he would accept with blind submissiveness whatever might take its place. The classes among whom the nationalist movement finds its strength are the classes which have been in the past accustomed to enjoy some degree of domination; the relics of the conquering races, Arabs or Turks, who have succeeded one another in the rule of Egypt, the small traders and shopkeepers of the towns, drawn from many different races, the students who have been influenced by the knowledge and the political ideas of the West. It is natural and healthy that a desire to share in the government of their country should grow up among these classes: it is in some degree a proof that the influence of the régime under which they live has been stimulating. But it is also obvious that if these classes were at once to reassume, under parliamentary forms, the dominance which they wielded so disastrously until thirty years ago, the result must be unhappy. They are being, under British guidance, gradually

introduced to a share in public affairs. But the establishment of a system of full self-government and national independence in Egypt, if it is to be successful, must wait until not only these classes, but also the classes beneath them, have been habituated to the sense of self-respect and of civic obligation by a longer acquaintance with the working of the Reign of Law.

Since the Great War broke out, the British position in Egypt has been regularised by the proclamation of a formal British protectorate. Perhaps the happiest fate which can befall the country is that it should make that gradual progress in political freedom, which is alone lasting, under the guidance of the power which has already given it prosperity, the ascendancy of an impartial law, freedom from arbitrary authority, freedom of speech and thought, and emancipation from the thraldom of foreign financial interests; and in the end it may possibly be the destiny of this ancient land, after so many vicissitudes, to take its place as one among a partnership of free nations in a world-encircling British Commonwealth of self-governing peoples.

The most vexed, difficult, and critical problems in the history of the British Empire since 1878—perhaps the most difficult in the whole course of its history—have been those connected with the South African colonies. In 1878 there were four distinct European provinces in South Africa, besides protected native areas, like Basutoland. All four had sprung from the original Anglo-

Dutch colony of the Cape of Good Hope. In two of them—Cape Colony and Natal—the two European peoples, British and Dutch, dwelt side by side, the Dutch being in a majority in the former, the British in the latter; but in both the difficulty of their relationship was complicated by the presence of large coloured populations, which included not only the native African peoples, Hottentots, Kaffirs, Zulus, and so forth, but also a large number of Asiatics, Malays who had been brought in by the Dutch before the British conquest, and Indians who had begun to come in more recently in large numbers, especially to Natal. Difference of attitude towards these peoples between the British authorities and the Dutch settlers had been in the past, as we have seen, a main cause of friction between the two European peoples, and had caused the long postponement of full self-government. In the other two provinces, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, the white inhabitants were, in 1878, almost exclusively Dutch. The native populations in these states were no longer in a state of formal slavery, but they were treated as definitely subject and inferior peoples: a law of the Transvaal laid it down that 'there shall be no equality in Church or State between white and black.' Thus the mutual distrust originally aroused by the native question still survived. It was intensified by the hostility of the Boers to British missionaries. When Livingstone, the British missionary hero, reported the difficulties

which the Boers had put in his way, British opinion was made more hostile than ever. Of the two Boer republics, the Orange Free State had enjoyed complete independence since 1854; and no serious friction ever arose between it and the British government. But the Transvaal, which had been turbulent and restless from the first, had been annexed in 1878, largely because it seemed to be drifting into a war of extermination with the Zulus. As a consequence, Britain was drawn into a badly managed Zulu War; and when this dangerous tribe had been conquered, the Transvaal revolted. The Boers defeated a small British force at Majuba; whereupon, instead of pursuing the struggle, the British government resolved to try the effect of magnanimity, and conceded (1881) full local independence to the Transvaal, subject only to a vague recognition of British suzerainty.

This was the beginning of many ills. The Transvaal Boers, knowing little of the world, thought they had defeated Britain; and under the lead of Paul Kruger, a shrewd old farmer who henceforth directed their policy with all but autocratic power, began to pursue the aim of creating a purely Dutch South Africa, and of driving the British into the sea. Kruger's policy was one of pure racial dominance, not of equality of rights. It was a natural aim, under all the conditions. But it was the source of grave evils. Inevitably it stimulated a parallel movement in Cape Colony, where Dutch and British were

learning to live peaceably together. The Boer extremists also began to look about for allies, and were tempted to hope for aid from Germany, who had just established herself in South-West Africa. Full of pride, the Transvaalers, though they already held a great and rich country which was very thinly peopled, began to push outwards, and especially to threaten the native tribes in the barren region of Bechuanaland, which lay between the Transvaal and the German territory. To this Britain replied by establishing a protectorate over Bechuanaland (1884) at the request of native chiefs: the motive of this annexation was, not suspicion of Germany, for this suspicion did not yet exist, but the desire to protect the native population.

Kruger's vague project of a Dutch South Africa would probably have caused little anxiety so long as his resources were limited to the strength of the thinly scattered Boer farmers. But the situation was fundamentally altered by the discovery of immense deposits first of diamonds and then of gold in South Africa, and most richly of all in the Rand district of the Transvaal. These discoveries brought a rapid inrush of European miners, financiers, and their miscellaneous camp-followers, and in a few years a very rich and populous European community had established itself in the Transvaal, and had created as its centre the mushroom new city of Johannesburg (founded 1884). These immigrants, who came from many countries, but especially from Britain,

changed the situation in the Transvaal; it seemed as though the majority among the white men in that state would soon be British.

A simple and primitive organisation of government, such as sufficed for the needs of Boer farmers, was manifestly inadequate for the needs of the new population, which included, in the nature of things, many undesirable elements; and it was natural that the mining population should desire to be brought under a more modern type of government, or to obtain an effective share in the control of their own affairs. But this was precisely what the Boers of Kruger's way of thinking were determined to refuse them. They were resolved that Boer ascendancy in the Transvaal should not be weakened. They therefore denied to the new immigrants all the rights of citizenship, and would not even permit them to manage the local affairs of Johannesburg. At the same time Kruger imposed heavy taxation upon the gold industry and the people who conducted it; and out of the proceeds he was able not only to pay the expenses of government without burdening the Boer farmers, but to build up the military power by means of which he hoped ultimately to carry out his great project. Thus the 'Uitlanders' found themselves treated as an inferior race in the land which their industry was enriching. They practically paid the cost of the government, but had no share in directing it.

The policy of racial ascendancy has seldom

been pursued in a more mischievous or dangerous form. One cannot but feel a certain sympathy with the Boers' desire to maintain Boer ascendancy in the land which they had conquered. Yet it must be remembered that they were themselves very recent immigrants: the whole settlement of the Transvaal had taken place in Paul Kruger's lifetime.

The diamonds and the gold of the recent discoveries had produced in South Africa a new element of power: the power of great wealth, wielded by a small number of men. Some of these were, of course, mean and sordid souls, to whom wealth was an end in itself. But among them one emerged who was more than a millionaire, who was capable of dreaming great dreams, and had acquired his wealth chiefly in order that he might have the power to realise them. This was Cecil Rhodes, an almost unique combination of the financier and the idealist. If he was sometimes tempted to resort to the questionable devices that high finance seems to cultivate, and if his ideals took on sometimes a rather vulgar colour, reflected from his money-bags, nevertheless ideals were the real governing factors in his life.

He dreamed of a great united state of South Africa; it was to be a British South Africa; but it was to be British, not in the sense in which Kruger wished it to be Dutch, but in the sense that equality of treatment between races should exist within it, as in all the British lands. He

dreamed also of a great brotherhood of British communities, or communities governed by British ideals, girdling the world, perhaps dominating it, and leading it to peace and liberty. As a lad fresh from Oxford, in long journeyings over the African veldt, he had in a curious, child-like way thought out a theology, a system of politics, and a mode of life for himself; and having reached the conclusion that the British race had on the whole more capacity for leading the world successfully than any other, he had resolved that it should be his life's business to forward and increase the influence of British ideas and of British modes of life; and he had systematically built up a colossal fortune in order that he might have the means to do this work. At the roots of this strange medley of poetry and chauvinism which filled his mind was an unchanging and deep veneration for the out-standing memory of his youth, Oxford, which in his mind stood for all the august venerable past of England, and was the expression of her moral essence. When he died, after a life of money-making and intrigue, in a remote and half-developed colony, it was found that most of his immense fortune had been left either to enrich the college where he had spent a short time as a lad, or to bring picked youths from all the British lands, and from what he regarded as the two great sister communities of America and Germany, so that they might drink in the spirit of England, at Oxford, its sanctuary.

His immediate task lay in South Africa, where, from the moment of his entry upon public life, he became the leader of the British cause as Kruger was the leader of the Dutch: millionaire-dreamer and shrewd, obstinate farmer, they form a strange contrast. The one stood for South African unity based upon equality of the white races: the other also for unity, but for unity based upon the ascendancy of one of the white races. In the politics of Cape Colony Rhodes achieved a remarkable success: he made friends with the Dutch party and its leader Hofmeyr, who for a long time gave steady support to his schemes and maintained him in the premiership. It was a good beginning for the policy of racial co-operation. But Rhodes' most remarkable achievement was the acquisition of the fertile upland regions of Mashonaland and Matabililand, now called Rhodesia in his honour. There were episodes which smelt of the shady practices of high finance in the events which led up to this acquisition. But in the result its settlement was admirably organised, after some initial difficulties, by the Chartered Company which Rhodes organised for the purpose. Now one important result of the acquisition of Rhodesia was that it hemmed in the Transvaal on the north; and, joined with the earlier annexation of Bechuanaland, isolated and insulated the two Dutch republics, which were now surrounded, everywhere except on the east, by British territory. From Cape Town up through Bechuanaland and through the new

territories Rhodes drove a long railway line. It was a business enterprise, but for him it was also a great imaginative conception, a link of empire, and he dreamed of the day when it should be continued to join the line which was being pushed up the Nile from Cairo through the hot sands of the Soudan.

But Rhodes' final and most unhappy venture was the attempt to force, by violent means, a solution of the Transvaal problem. He hoped that the Uitlanders might be able, by a revolution, to overthrow Kruger's government, and, perhaps in conjunction with the more moderate Boers, to set up a system of equal treatment which would make co-operation with the other British colonies easy, and possibly bring about a federation of them all. He was too impatient to let the situation mature quietly. He forced the issue by encouraging the foolish Jameson Raid of 1895. This, like all wilful resorts to violence, only made things worse. It alienated and angered the more moderate Boers in the Transvaal, who were not without sympathy with the Uitlanders. It aroused the indignation of the Cape Colony Boers, and embittered racial feeling there. It put the British cause in the wrong in the eyes of the whole world, and made the Boers appear as a gallant little people struggling in the folds of a merciless python-empire. It increased immensely the difficulty of the British government in negotiating with the Transvaal for better treatment of the Uitlanders. It stiffened the

backs of Kruger and his party. The German Kaiser telegraphed his congratulations on the defeat of the Raid 'without the aid of friendly powers,' and the implication that this aid would be forthcoming in case of necessity led the Boers to believe that they could count on German help in a struggle with Britain. So every concession to the Uitlanders was obstinately refused; and after three years more of fruitless negotiation, during which German munitions were pouring into the Transvaal, the South African War began.

The war was one in which all the appearances were against Britain, and the whole world condemned British greed and aggression. It was a case of Goliath fighting David, the biggest empire in the world attacking two tiny republics; yet the weaker side is not necessarily always in the right. It seemed to be a conflict for the possession of gold-mines; yet Britain has never made, and never hoped to make, a penny of profit out of these mines, which remained after the war in the same hands as before it. It was a case of the interests of financiers and gold-hunters against those of simple and honest farmers; yet even financiers have rights, and even farmers can be unjust. In reality the issue was a quite simple and straightforward one. It was the issue of racial ascendancy against racial equality, and as her traditions bade her, Britain fought for racial equality. It was the issue of self-government for the whole community as against the entrenched dominion of one section; and there was no

question on which side the history of Britain must lead her to range herself. Whatever the rest of the world might say, the great self-governing colonies, which were free to help or not as they thought fit, had no doubts at all. They all sent contingents to take part in the war; because they knew it to be a war for principles fundamental to themselves.

The war dragged its weary course, and the Boers fought with such heroism, and often with such chivalry, as to win the cordial respect and admiration of their enemies. It is always a pity when men fight; but sometimes a fight lets bad blood escape, and makes friendship easier between foes who have learnt mutual respect. Four years after the peace which added the Transvaal and the Orange Free State as conquered dominions to the British Empire, the British government established in both of these provinces the full institutions of responsible self-government. As in Canada sixty years earlier, the two races were bidden to work together and make the best of one another; because now their destinies were freely under their own control. Yet this was even a bolder experiment than that of Canada, and showed a more venturesome confidence in the healing power of self-government. How has it turned out? Within five years more, the four divided provinces which had presented such vexed problems in 1878, were combined in the federal Union of South Africa, governed by institutions which reproduced those of Britain and

her colonies. And when the Great War came, and the long and elaborate preparations of the Germans to stir up a revolt among the oppressed Boers produced an outbreak among a few of the more ignorant, the rising was crushed by the Boers themselves, led by the brave and honourable Botha, who had commanded the Boer armies in the earlier war; and a combined force, half Boer, half British, under the same leadership, proceeded to overrun and conquer the German colony; and another Boer general took command of an army of Britons and Boers and Indians to attack yet another German colony in Eastern Africa.

The South African problem, which had been a continuous vexation since the moment of the British conquest, was solved. It was solved by the British panacea of self-government and equal rights. Out of the severest test which the modern British Empire had yet had to undergo, it had emerged, not broken, as in 1782, but strengthened, and confirmed in its faith in the principles on which it was built. More than that, on the first occasion on which the essential principles or the power of the empire had been challenged in war, all the self-governing colonies had voluntarily borne their share. Never before had British colonies—never before had a colony of any European state—sent men oversea to fight in a common cause: and this not because their immediate interests were threatened, but for the sake of an idea. For that reason the South

African War marks an epoch not merely in the history of the British Empire, but of European imperialism as a whole.

The unity of sentiment and aim which was thus expressed had, however, been steadily growing throughout the period of European rivalry; and doubtless in the colonies, as in Britain, the new value attached to the imperial tie was due in a large degree to the very fact of the eagerness of the other European powers for extra-European possessions. Imperialist sentiment began to become a factor in British politics just about the beginning of this period: in 1878 the Imperial Federation Society was founded, and about the same time Disraeli, who had once spoken of the colonies as 'millstones around our necks,' was making himself the mouthpiece of the new imperialist spirit. To this wave of feeling a very notable contribution was made by Sir John Seeley's brilliant book, *The Expansion of England.* Slight as it was, and containing no facts not already familiar, it gave a new perspective to the events of the last four centuries of British history, and made the growth of the Empire seem something not merely casual, external, and incidental, but a vital and most significant part of the British achievement. The powerful impression which it created was deepened by other books, like Froude's *Oceana* or Sir Charles Dilke's *Greater Britain,* the title of which alone was a proclamation and a prophecy. It was strengthened also by the wonderful imperial pageants, like nothing else

ever witnessed in the world, which began with the two Jubilee celebrations of 1887 and 1897, and were continued in the funerals of Queen Victoria and Edward VII., the coronations of Edward VII. and George V., and the superb Durbars of Delhi. The imaginative appeal of such solemn representations of a world-scattered fellowship of peoples and nations and tongues must not be underestimated. At first there was perhaps a suggestion of blatancy, and of mere pride in dominion, in the way in which these celebrations were received; the graver note of Kipling's *Recessional*, inspired by the Jubilee of 1897, was not unneeded. But after the strain and anxiety of the South African War, a different temper visibly emerged.

More important than the pageants were the conferences of imperial statesmen which arose out of them. The prime ministers of the great colonies began to deliberate in common with the statesmen of Britain; and the discussions, though quite informal and devoid of authority, have become more intimate and vital as time has passed: a beginning at least has been made in the common discussion of problems affecting the Empire as a whole. And alongside of, and in consequence of, all this, imperial questions have been treated with a new seriousness in the British parliament, and the offices which deal with them have ceased to be, as they once were, reserved for statesmen of the second rank. The new attitude was pointedly expressed when in 1895

Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, the most brilliant politician of his generation, who could have had almost any office he desired, deliberately chose the Colonial Office. His tenure of that office was not, perhaps, memorable for any far-reaching change in colonial policy, though he introduced some admirable improvements in the administration of the tropical colonies; but it was most assuredly memorable for the increased intensity of interest which he succeeded in arousing in imperial questions, both at home and in the colonies. The campaign which he initiated, after the South African War, for the institution of an Imperial Zollverein or a system of Colonial Preference was a failure, and indeed was probably a blunder, since it implied an attempt to return to that material basis of imperial unity which had formed the core of the old colonial system, and had led to the most unhappy results in regard to the American colonies. But at least it was an attempt to realise a fuller unity than had yet been achieved, and in its first form included an inspiring appeal to the British people to face sacrifices, should they be necessary, for that high end. Whether these ideas contribute to the ultimate solution of the imperial problem or not, it was at least a good thing that the question should be raised and discussed.

One further feature among the many developments of this era must not be left untouched. It is the rise of a definitely national spirit in the greater members of the Empire. To this a great

encouragement has been given by the political unity which some of these communities have for the first time attained during these years. National sentiment in the Dominion of Canada was stimulated into existence by the Federation of 1867. The unification of Australia which was at length achieved in the Federation of 1900 did not indeed create, but it greatly strengthened, the rise of a similar spirit of Australian nationality. A national spirit in South Africa, merging in itself the hostile racial sentiments of Boer and Briton, may well prove to be the happiest result of the Union of South Africa. In India also a national spirit is coming to birth, bred among a deeply divided people by the political unity, the peace, and the equal laws, which have been the greatest gifts of British rule; its danger is that it may be too quick to imagine that the unity which makes nationhood can be created merely by means of resolutions declaring that it exists, but the desire to create it is an altogether healthy desire. On the surface it might appear that the rise of a national spirit in the great members of the Empire is a danger to the ideal of imperial unity; but that need not be so. The sense of nationhood is the inevitable outcome of the freedom and co-operation which the British system everywhere encourages; to attempt to repress it lest it should endanger imperial unity would be as short-sighted as the old attempt to restrict the natural growth of self-government because it also seemed a danger to imperial unity.

The essence of the British system is the free development of natural tendencies, and the encouragement of variety of types; and the future towards which the Empire seems to be tending is not that of a highly centralised and unified state, but that of a brotherhood of free nations, united by community of ideas and institutions, co-operating for many common ends, and above all for the common defence in case of need, but each freely following the natural trend of its own development.

That is the conception of empire, unlike any other ever entertained by men upon this planet, which was already shaping itself among the British communities when the terrible ordeal of the Great War came to test it, and to prove as not even the staunchest believer could have anticipated, that it was capable of standing the severest trial which men or institutions have ever had to undergo.

IX

THE GREAT CHALLENGE, 1900-1914

At the opening of the twentieth century the long process whereby the whole globe has been brought under the influence of European civilisation was practically completed; and there had emerged a group of gigantic empires, which in size far surpassed the ancient Empire of Rome; each resting upon, and drawing its strength from, a unified nation-state. In the hands of these empires the political destinies of the world seemed to rest, and the lesser nation-states appeared to be altogether overshadowed by them. Among the vast questions which fate was putting to humanity, there were none more momentous than these: On what principles, and in what spirit, were these nation-empires going to use the power which they had won over their vast and varied multitudes of subjects? What were to be their relations with one another? Were they to be relations of conflict, each striving to weaken or destroy its rivals in the hope of attaining a final world-supremacy? Or were they to be relations of co-operation in the development of civilisation, extending to the whole world those tentative but far from unsuccessful efforts

after international co-operation which the European states had long been endeavouring to work out among themselves ? [1] At first it seemed as if the second alternative might be adopted, for these were the days of the Hague Conferences ; but the development of events during the first fourteen years of the century showed with increasing clearness that one of the new world-states was resolute to make a bid for world-supremacy, and the gradual maturing of this challenge, culminating in the Great War, constitutes the supreme interest of these years.

The oldest, and (by the rough tests of area, population, and natural resources) by far the greatest of these new composite world-states, was the British Empire, which included 12,000,000 square miles, or one-quarter of the land-surface of the globe. It rested upon the wealth, vigour, and skill of a population of 45,000,000 in the homeland, to which might be added, but only by their own consent, the resources of five young daughter-nations, whose population only amounted to about 15,000,000. Thus it stood upon a rather narrow foundation. And while it was the greatest, it was also beyond comparison the most loosely organised of all these empires. It was rather a partnership of a multitude of states in every grade of civilisation than an organised and consolidated dominion. Five of its chief members were completely self-governing, and shared in the

[1] See the Essay on Internationalism (*Nationalism and Internationalism*, p. 124 ff.).

common burdens only by their own free will. All the remaining members were organised as distinct units, though subject to the general control of the home government. The resources of each unit were employed exclusively for the development of its own welfare. They paid no tribute; they were not required to provide any soldiers beyond the minimum required for their own defence and the maintenance of internal order. This empire, in short, was not in any degree organised for military purposes. It possessed no great land-army, and was, therefore, incapable of threatening the existence of any of its rivals. It depended for its defence firstly upon its own admirable strategic distribution, since it was open to attack at singularly few points otherwise than from the sea; it depended mainly, for that reason, upon naval power, and secure command of the sea-roads by which its members were linked was absolutely vital to its existence. Only by sea-power (which is always weak in the offensive) could it threaten its neighbours or rivals; and its sea-power, during four centuries, had always, in war, been employed to resist the threatened domination of any single power, and had never, in time of peace, been employed to restrict the freedom of movement of any of the world's peoples. On the contrary, the Freedom of the Seas had been established by its victories, and dated from the date of its ascendancy. The life-blood of this empire was trade; its supreme interest was manifestly peace. The

conception of the meaning of empire which had been developed by its history was not a conception of dominion for dominion's sake, or of the exploitation of subjects for the advantage of a master. On the contrary, it had come to mean (especially during the nineteenth century) a trust; a trust to be administered in the interests of the subjects primarily, and secondarily in the interests of the whole civilised world. That this is not the assertion of a theory or an ideal, but of a fact and a practice, is sufficiently demonstrated by two unquestionable facts: the first that the units which formed this empire were not only free from all tribute in money or men, but were not even required to make any contribution towards the upkeep of the fleet, upon which the safety of all depended; the second that every port and every market in this vast empire, so far as they were under the control of the central government, were thrown open as freely to the citizens of all other states as to its own. Finally, in this empire there had never been any attempt to impose a uniformity of method or even of laws upon the infinitely various societies which it included: it not merely permitted, it cultivated and admired, varieties of type, and to the maximum practicable degree believed in self-government. Because these were the principles upon which it was administered, the real strength of this empire was far greater than it appeared. But beyond question it was ill-prepared and ill-organised for war; desiring peace beyond all

things, and having given internal peace to one-quarter of the earth's population, it was apt to be over-sanguine about the maintenance of peace. And if a great clash of empires should come, this was likely to tell against it.

The second oldest—perhaps it ought to be described as the oldest—of the world-empires, and the second largest in area, was the Russian Empire, which covered 8,500,000 square miles of territory. Its strength was that its vast domains formed a single continuous block, and that its population was far more homogeneous than that of its rivals, three out of four of its subjects being either of the Russian or of kindred Slavonic stock. Its weaknesses were that it was almost land-locked, nearly the whole of its immense coast-line being either inaccessible or ice-bound during half of the year; that it had not adopted modern methods of government, being subject to an inefficient, high-handed, and corruptible bureaucracy; that its means of communication and its capacity for the movement of great armies were ill-developed; and that it was far behind all its rivals in the control of industrial machinery and applied science, upon which modern warfare depends, and without which the greatest wealth of man-power is ineffective. Moreover, it was in 1900 on the eve of a political transformation, the full extent and consequences of which no one could foretell.

The third of the great empires was that of France, with 5,000,000 square miles of territory,

mostly acquired in very recent years, but having roots in the past. It rested upon a home population of only 39,000,000, but these belonged to the most enlightened, the most inventive, and the most chivalrous stock in Christendom. As France had, a hundred years before, raised the standard of human rights among the European peoples, so she was now bringing law and justice and peace to the backward peoples of Africa and the East; and was finding in the pride of this achievement some consolation for the brutality with which she had been hurled from the leadership of Europe.

The fourth of the great empires was America, with some 3,000,000 square miles of territory, and a vague claim of suzerainty over the vast area of Central and South America. Her population, primarily British in stock, had become a medley of all the European races, incompletely welded into unity by a tradition of modern origin, the principal element of which was a belief that America was not concerned in, or affected by, the disputes of Europe. Though she had herself taken a share in the latest stages of the imperialist movement, and though the imperialist spirit was never more loudly expressed than in the interpretation she had latterly given to her Monroe Doctrine, she did not realise that the Monroe Doctrine itself was liable to be challenged, could not be defended by words alone, and had indeed only held good because it was in effect defended by the British fleet. Bemused with her conviction

of her superiority to, and aloofness from, the decadent civilisations of the Old World, she could not see that the titanic conflict of empires which was looming ahead was in no sense a purely European question, but must involve, for good or ill, the fortunes of the whole globe; and so, when the conflict came, she regarded it merely as an occasion for benevolent and (at the moment) highly profitable neutrality.

We cannot stop to analyse the minor world-states, Italy and Japan; both of which might, as easily as America, have stood aside from the conflict, but that both realised its immense significance for themselves and for the world.

Last among the world-states, both in the date of its foundation and in the extent of its domains, was the empire of Germany, which covered considerably less than 1,500,000 square miles, but rested upon a home population of nearly 70,000,000, more docile, more industrious, and more highly organised than any other human society. The empire of Germany had been more easily and more rapidly acquired than any of the others, yet since its foundation it had known many troubles, because the hard and domineering spirit in which it was ruled did not know how to win the affections of its subjects. A parvenu among the great states—having only attained the dignity of nationhood in the mid-nineteenth century—Germany has shown none of that 'genius for equality' which is the secret of good manners and of friendship among nations as among indi-

viduals. Her conversation, at home and abroad, had the vulgar self-assertiveness of the parvenu, and turned always and wholly upon her own greatness; when she wished to be firm she bullied, when she wished to be polite she cringed. And her conduct has been the echo of her conversation. She has persuaded herself that she has a monopoly of power, of wisdom, and of knowledge, and deserves to rule the earth. Of the magnitude and far-reaching nature of her imperialist ambitions, we have said something in a previous chapter. She had as yet failed to realise any of these vaulting schemes, but she had not for that reason abandoned any of them. They all fell into their places as parts of a larger ambition. Germany must be the mistress of the world, and no empire or nation must survive beside her own, except by her permission and on her terms. The world could not believe that any sane people could entertain such megalomaniac visions; not even the events of the decade 1904-14 were enough to bring conviction; it needed the tragedy and desolation of the war to prove at once their reality and their folly. For they were folly even if they could be momentarily realised. They sprang from the traditions of Prussia, which seemed to demonstrate that all things were possible to him who dared all, and scrupled nothing, and calculated his chances and his means with precision. By force and fraud the greatness of Prussia had been built; by force and fraud Prussia-Germany had become the lead-

ing state of Europe, feared by all her rivals and safe from all attack. Force and fraud appeared to be the determining factors in human affairs; even the philosophers of Germany devoted their powers to justifying and glorifying them. By force and fraud, aided by science, Germany should become mistress of the world.

On the surface it seemed mere madness for the least and latest of the great empires to challenge all the rest, just as it had once seemed madness for Frederick the Great, with his little state, to stand up against all but one of the great European powers. But Germany had calculated her chances, and knew that there were many things in her favour. She knew that in the last resort the strength of the world-states rested upon their European foundations, and here the inequality was much less. In a European struggle she could draw great advantage from her central geographical position, which she had improved to the highest extent by the construction of a great system of strategic railways. She could trust to her superbly organised military system, more perfect than that of any other state, just because no other state has ever regarded war as the final aim and the highest form of state action. She commanded unequalled resources in all the mechanical apparatus of war; she had spared no pains to build up her armament works, which had, indeed, supplied a great part of the world; she had developed all the scientific industries in such a way that their factories could

be rapidly and easily turned to war purposes; and having given all her thoughts to the coming struggle as no other nation had done, she knew, better than any other, how largely it would turn upon these things. She counted securely upon winning an immense advantage from the fact that she would herself fix the date of war, and enter upon it with a sudden spring, fully prepared, against rivals who, clinging to the hope of peace, would be unready for the onset. She hoped to sow jealousies among her rivals; she trusted to catch them at a time when they were engrossed in their domestic concerns, and in this respect fate seemed to play into her hands, since at the moment which she had predetermined, Britain, France, and Russia were all distracted by domestic controversies. She trusted also to her reading of the minds and temper of her opponents; and here she went wildly astray, as must always be the fate of the nation or the man who is blinded by self-complacency and by contempt for others.

But, above all, she put her trust in a vast political combination which she had laboriously prepared during the years preceding the great conflict: the combination which we have learned to call *Mittel-Europa*. None of us realised to how great an extent this plan had been put in operation before the war began. Briefly it depended on the possibility of obtaining an intimate union with the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a control over the Turkish Empire, and a sufficient

influence or control among the little Balkan states to ensure through communication. If the scheme could be carried out in full, it would involve the creation of a practically continuous empire stretching from the North Sea to the Persian Gulf, and embracing a total population of over 150,000,000. This would be a dominion worth acquiring for its own sake, since it would put Germany on a level with her rivals. But it would have the further advantage that it would hold a central position in relation to the other world-powers, corresponding to Germany's central position in relation to the other nation-states of Europe. Russia could be struck at along the whole length of her western and south-western frontier; the British Empire could be threatened in Egypt, the centre of its ocean lines of communication, and also from the Persian Gulf in the direction of India; the French Empire could be struck at the heart, in its European centre; and all without seriously laying open the attacking powers to the invasion of sea-power.

It was a bold and masterful scheme, and it was steadily pursued during the years before the war. Austro-Hungary was easily influenced. The ascendancy of her ruling races—nay, the very existence of her composite anti-national empire—was threatened by the nationalist movements among her subject-peoples, who, cruelly oppressed at home, were more and more beginning to turn towards their free brothers over the border, in Serbia and Rumania; and behind these loomed

Russia, the traditional protector of the Slav peoples and of the Orthodox faith. Austro-Hungary, therefore, leant upon the support of Germany, and her dominant races would be very willing to join in a war which should remove the Russian menace and give them a chance of subjugating the Serbs. This latter aim suited the programme of Germany as well as it suited that of Austria, since the railways to Constantinople and Salonika ran through Serbia. Serbia, therefore, was doomed; she stood right in the path of the Juggernaut car.

The acquisition of influence in Turkey was also comparatively easy. Constantinople is a city where lavish corruption can work wonders. Moreover Turkey was, in the last years of the nineteenth century, in bad odour with Europe; and Germany was able to earn in 1897 the lasting gratitude of the infamous Sultan Abdul Hamid by standing between him and the other European powers, who were trying to interfere with his indulgence in the pastime of massacring the Armenians. Turkey had had many protectors among the European powers. She had never before had one so complaisant about the murder of Christians. From that date Germany was all-powerful in Turkey. The Turkish army was reorganised under her direction, and practically passed under her control. Most of the Turkish railways were acquired and managed by German companies. And presently the great scheme of the Bagdad railway began to be carried through.

The Young Turk revolution in 1908 and the fall of Abdul Hamid gave, indeed, a shock to the German ascendancy; but only for a moment. The Young Turks were as amenable to corruption as their predecessors; and under the guidance of Enver Bey Turkey relapsed into German suzerainty. Thus the most important parts of the great scheme were in a fair way of success by 1910. One of the merits of this scheme was that as the Sultan of Turkey was the head of the Mahomedan religion, the German protectorate over Turkey gave a useful mode of appealing to the religious sentiments of Mahomedans everywhere. Twice over, in 1898 and in 1904, the Kaiser had declared that he was the protector of all Mahomedans throughout the world. Most of the Mahomedans were subjects either of Britain, France, or Russia—the three rival empires that were to be overthrown. As General Bernhardi put it, Germany in her struggle for *Weltmacht* must supplement her material weapons with spiritual weapons.

To obtain a similar ascendancy over the Balkan states was more difficult; for the Turk was the secular enemy of all of them, and Austria was the foe of two of the four, and to bring these little states into partnership with their natural enemies seemed an all but impossible task. Yet a good deal could be, and was, done. In two of the four chief Balkan states German princes occupied the thrones, a Hohenzollern in Rumania, a Coburger in Bulgaria; in a third, the heir-

apparent to the Greek throne was honoured with the hand of the Kaiser's own sister. Western peoples had imagined that the day had gone by when the policy of states could be deflected by such facts; especially as the Balkan states all had democratic parliamentary constitutions. But the Germans knew better than the West. They knew that kings could still play a great part in countries where the bulk of the electorate were illiterate, and where most of the class of professional politicians were always open to bribes. Their calculations were justified. King Carol of Rumania actually signed a treaty of alliance with Germany without consulting his ministers or parliament. King Ferdinand of Bulgaria was able to draw his subjects into an alliance with the Turks, who had massacred their fathers in 1876, against the Russians, who had saved them from destruction. King Constantine of Greece was able to humiliate and disgrace the country over which he ruled, in order to serve the purposes of his brother-in-law. These sovereigns may have been the unconscious implements of a policy which they did not understand. But they earned their wages.

There were, indeed, two moments when the great scheme came near being wrecked. One was when Italy, the sleeping partner of the Triple Alliance, who was not made a sharer in these grandiose and vile projects, attacked and conquered the Turkish province of Tripoli in 1911, and strained to breaking-point the loyalty of the

Turks to Germany. The other was when, under the guidance of the two great statesmen of the Balkans, Venizelos of Greece and Pashitch of Serbia, the Balkan League was formed, and the power of Turkey in Europe broken. If the League had held together, the great German project would have been ruined, or at any rate gravely imperilled. But Germany and Austria contrived to throw an apple of discord among the Balkan allies at the Conference of London in 1912, and then stimulated Bulgaria to attack Serbia and Greece. The League was broken up irreparably; its members had been brought into a sound condition of mutual hatred; and Bulgaria, isolated among distrustful neighbours, was ready to become the tool of Germany in order that by her aid she might achieve (fond hope!) the hegemony of the Balkans. This brilliant stroke was effected in 1913—the year before the Great War. All that remained was to ruin Serbia. For that purpose Austria had long been straining at the leash. She had been on the point of making an attack in 1909, in 1912, in 1913. In 1914 the leash was slipped. If the rival empires chose to look on while Serbia was destroyed, well and good: in that case the Berlin-Bagdad project could be systematically developed and consolidated, and the attack on the rival empires could come later. If not, still it was well; for all was ready for the great challenge.

We have dwelt at some length upon this gigantic project, because it has formed during all

these years the heart and centre of the German designs, and even to-day it is the dearest of German hopes. Not until she is utterly defeated will she abandon it; because its abandonment must involve the abandonment of every hope of a renewed attempt at world-supremacy, after an interval for reorganisation and recovery. Not until the German control over Austria and Turkey, more complete to-day, after two and a half years of war, than it has ever been before, has been destroyed by the splitting up of Austria among the nationalities to which her territory belongs, and by the final overthrow of the Turkish Empire, will the German dream of world-dominion be shattered.

But while this fundamentally important project was being worked out, other events, almost equally momentous in their bearing upon the coming conflict, were taking place elsewhere. It was the obvious policy of Germany to keep her rivals on bad terms with one another. The tradition of Bismarck bade her isolate each victim before it was destroyed. But the insolence and the megalomania of modern Germany made this difficult. German writers were busily and openly explaining the fate marked out for all the other powers. France was to be so crushed that she would 'never again be able to stand in our path.' The bloated and unconsolidated empire of Britain was to be shattered. The Russian barbarians were to be thrust back into Asia. And what the pamphleteers and journalists wrote

was expressed with almost equal clearness in the tone of German diplomacy. In face of all this, the clumsy attempts of the German government to isolate their rivals met with small success, even though these rivals had many grounds of controversy among themselves. France knew what she had to fear; and the interpolation of a few clumsy bids for her favour amid the torrent of insults against her which filled the German press, were of no avail; especially as she had to look on at the unceasing petty persecution practised in the lost provinces of Alsace-Lorraine. Russia had been alienated by the first evidences of German designs in the Balkans, and driven into a close alliance with France. Britain, hitherto obstinately friendly to Germany, began to be perturbed by the growing German programmes of naval construction from 1900 onwards, by the absolute refusal of Germany to consider any proposal for mutual disarmament or retardation of construction, and above all by the repeated assertions of the head of the German state that Germany aspired to naval supremacy, that her future was on the sea, that the trident must be in her hands. Should the trident fall into any but British hands, the existence of the British Empire, and the very livelihood of the British homeland, would rest at the mercy of him who wielded it. So, quite inevitably, the three threatened empires drew together and reconciled their differences in the Franco-British agreement of 1904 and the Russo-British agreement of 1907.

These agreements dealt wholly with extra-European questions, and therefore deserve some analysis. In the Franco-British agreement the main feature was that while France withdrew her opposition to the British position in Egypt, Britain on her side recognised the paramount political interest of France in Morocco. It was the agreement about Morocco which counted for most; because it was the beginning of a controversy which lasted for seven years, which was twice used by Germany as a means for testing, and endeavouring to break, the friendship of her rivals, and which twice brought Europe to the verge of war.

Morocco is a part of that single region of mountainous North Africa of which France already controlled the remainder, Tunis and Algeria. Peoples of the same type inhabited the whole region, but while in Tunis and Algeria they were being brought under the influence of law and order, in Morocco they remained in anarchy. Only a conventional line divided Morocco from Algeria, and the anarchy among the tribesmen on one side of the line inevitably had an unhappy effect upon the people on the other side of the line. More than once France had been compelled, for the sake of Algeria, to intervene in Morocco. It is impossible to exaggerate the anarchy which existed in the interior of this rich and wasted country. It was, indeed, the most lawless region remaining in the world: when Mr. Bernard Shaw wished to find a scene for a play

in which the hero should be a brigand chief leading a band of rascals and outlaws from all countries, Morocco presented the only possible scene remaining in the world. And this anarchy was the more unfortunate, not only because the country was naturally rich and ought to have been prosperous, but also because it lay in close proximity to great civilised states, and on one of the main routes of commerce at the entrance to the Mediterranean. In its ports a considerable traffic was carried on by European traders, but this traffic was, owing to the anarchic condition of the country, nothing like as great as it ought to have been. In 1905 39 per cent. of it was controlled by French traders, 32 per cent. by British traders, 12 per cent. by German traders, and 5 per cent. by Spanish traders. Manifestly this was a region where law and order ought to be established, in the interests of civilisation. The powers most directly concerned were in the first place France, with her neighbouring territory and her preponderant trade; in the second place Britain, whose strategic interests as well as her trading interests were involved; in the third place Spain, which directly faced the Morocco coast; while Germany had only trading interests involved, and so long as these were safeguarded, had no ground of complaint. If any single power was to intervene, manifestly the first claim was upon France.

In 1900 France had directed the attention of Europe to the disorderly condition of Morocco,

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and had proposed to intervene to restore order, on the understanding that she should not annex the country, or interfere with the trading rights of other nations. Some states agreed; Germany made no reply, but made no objection. But owing to the opposition of Britain, who was then on bad terms with France and feared to see an unfriendly power controlling the entrance to the Mediterranean, no action was taken; and in the next years the chaos in Morocco grew worse. By the agreement of 1904 Britain withdrew her objection to French intervention, and recognised the prior political rights of France in Morocco, on the condition that the existing government of Morocco should be maintained, that none of its territory should be annexed, and that 'the open door' should be preserved for the trade of all nations. But, of course, it was possible, and even probable, that the existing Moroccan government could not be made efficient. In that case, what should happen? The possibility had to be contemplated by reasonable statesmen, and provided against. But to do so in a public treaty would have been to condemn beforehand the existing system. Therefore a hypothetical arrangement was made for this possible future event in a secret treaty, to which Spain was made a party; whereby it was provided that if the arrangement should break down, and France should have to establish a definite protectorate, the vital part of the north coast should pass under the control of Spain.

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To the public part of these arrangements, which alone were of immediate importance, no objection was made by any of the other powers, and the German Chancellor told the Reichstag that German interests were not affected. France accordingly drew up a scheme of reforms in the government of Morocco, which the Sultan was invited to accept. But before he had accepted them the German Kaiser suddenly came to Tangier in his yacht, had an interview with the Sultan in which he urged him to reject the French demands, and made a public speech in which he declared himself the protector of the Mahomedans, asserted that no European power had special rights in Morocco, and announced his determination to support the 'independence and integrity' of Morocco—which in existing circumstances meant the maintenance of anarchy. What was the reason for this sudden and insolent intervention—made without any previous communication with France? The main reason was that France's ally, Russia, had just been severely defeated by Japan, and would not be able to take part in a European war. Therefore, it appeared, France might be bullied; Britain might not be willing to risk war on such an issue; the Entente of 1904 might be destroyed; the extension of French influence might be prevented; and the preservation of a state of anarchy in Morocco would leave open the chance of a seizure of that country by Germany at a later date, thus enabling her to dominate the entrance to the Mediterranean, and to threaten

Algeria. But this pretty scheme did not succeed. The Entente held firm. Britain gave steady support to France, as indeed she was bound in honour to do; and in the end a conference of the powers was held at Algeçiras (Spain). At this conference the predominating right of France to political influence in Morocco was formally recognised; and it was agreed that the government of the Sultan should be maintained, and that all countries should have equal trading rights in Morocco. This was, of course, the very basis of the Franco-British agreement. On every point at which she tried to score a success over France, Germany was defeated by the votes of the other powers, even her own ally, Italy, deserting her.

But the German intervention had had its effect. The Sultan had refused the French scheme of reform. The elements of disorder in Morocco were encouraged to believe that they had the protection of Germany. The anarchy grew steadily worse. In 1907 Sir Harry Maclean was captured by a brigand chief, and the British government had to pay £20,000 ransom for his release. In the same year a number of European workmen engaged on harbour works at Casablanca were murdered by tribesmen; and the French had to send a force which had a year's fighting before it reduced the district to order. In 1911 the Sultan was besieged in his capital (where there were a number of European residents) by insurgent tribesmen, and had to invite the French to send an army to his relief.

This was seized upon by Germany as a pretext. Morocco was no longer 'independent.' The agreement of Algeçiras was dead. Therefore she resumed her right to put forward what claims she pleased in Morocco. Suddenly her gunboat, the *Panther*, appeared off Agadir. It was meant as an assertion that Germany had as much right to intervene in Morocco as France. And it was accompanied by a demand that if France wanted to be left free in Morocco, she must buy the approval of Germany. The settlement of Morocco was to be a question solely between France and Germany. The Entente of 1904, the agreement of 1906, the Moroccan interests of Britain (much more important than those of Germany), and the interests of the other powers of the Algeçiras Conference, were to count for nothing. Germany's voice must be the determining factor. But Germany announced that she was willing to be bought off by large concessions of French territory elsewhere—provided that Britain was not allowed to have anything to say: provided, that is, that the agreement of 1904 was scrapped. This was a not too subtle way of trying to drive a wedge between two friendly powers. It did not succeed. Britain insisted upon being consulted. There was for a time a real danger of war. In the end peace was maintained by the cession by France of considerable areas in the Congo as the price of German abstention from intervening in a sphere where she had no right to intervene. But Morocco was left under a definite French protectorate.

We have dwelt upon the Morocco question at some length, partly because it attracted a vast amount of interest during the years of preparation for the war; partly because it affords an extraordinarily good illustration of the difficulty of maintaining peaceable relations with Germany, and of the spirit in which Germany approached the delicate questions of inter-imperial relationships—a spirit far removed indeed from that friendly willingness for compromise and co-operation by which alone the peace of the world could be maintained; and partly because it illustrates the crudity and brutality of the methods by which Germany endeavoured to separate her intended victims. It is improbable that she ever meant to go to war on the Moroccan question. She meant to go to war on whatever pretext might present itself when all her preparations were ready; but in the meanwhile she would avoid war on all questions but one: and that one was the great Berlin-Bagdad project, the keystone of her soaring arch of Empire. She would fight to prevent the ruin of that scheme. Otherwise she would preserve the peace, she would even make concessions to preserve the peace, until the right moment had come. In that sense Germany was a peace-loving power: in that sense alone.

On the agreement between Russia and Britain in 1907 it is unnecessary to dwell with such fulness. The agreement turned mainly upon the removal of causes of friction in the Middle East—in Persia and the Persian Gulf, and in Tibet.

These were in themselves interesting and thorny questions, especially the question of Persia, where the two powers established distinct spheres of interest and a sort of joint protectorate. But they need not detain us, because they had no direct bearing upon the events leading up to the war, except in so far as, by removing friction between two rivals of long standing, they made it possible for them to co-operate for their common defence against a menace that became more and more apparent.

From 1907 onwards Germany found herself confronted by united defensive action on the part of the three empires whose destruction she intended to compass. It was not (except as regarded France and Russia) a formal alliance which bound these powers. There was no fixed agreement between them as to military co-operation. France and Britain had indeed, in 1906 and in 1911, consulted as to the military steps they should take if they were drawn into war, as seemed likely in those years, but neither was in any way bound to help the other under all circumstances. France and Britain had also agreed that the French fleet should be concentrated in the Mediterranean, the main British fleet in the North Sea. This arrangement (which was universally known, and, indeed, could not be concealed) put Britain under a moral obligation to defend France against naval attack, but only if France were the object of aggression. It was, therefore, actually a safeguard of peace, since it

ensured that neither France nor, consequently, her ally, Russia, would begin a war without being sure of the concurrence of Britain, the most pacific of powers. As the diplomatic records show, at the opening of the Great War they were not sure of this concurrence, even for naval purposes, until August 1, when the die was already cast. The Triple Entente, therefore, was not an alliance; it was only an agreement for common diplomatic action in the hope of averting a terrible menace.

Until 1911 Germany, or some elements in Germany, seem to have hoped that she could get her own way by bullying and rattling her sabre, and that by these means she could frighten her rivals, make them mutually distrustful, and so break up their combination and deal with them in detail. Those who held this view were the peace-party (so-called), and they included the Kaiser and his Chancellor. But there was always a formidable and influential party in Germany which had no patience with these hesitations, and was eager to draw the sabre. It included the men of the General Staff, backed by the numerous pan-German societies and newspapers. The issue of the Morocco question in 1911, which showed that the policy of bullying had failed, played into the hands of the men of violence; and from this moment began the last strenuous burst of military preparation which preceded the war. In 1911 was passed the first of a series of Army Acts for the increase of the already immense German army,

and still more for the provision of vast equipment and the scientific apparatus of destruction; two further Acts for the same purpose followed in 1912 and in 1913. In 1911 also was published General Bernhardi's famous book, which defined and described the course of future action, and the aim which Germany was henceforth to pursue with all her strength: *Weltmacht oder Niedergang*, world-power or downfall.

The events in the Balkans in 1912 and 1913 completed the conversion of those who still clung to the policy of peaceful bullying. The formation and triumph of the Balkan League in 1912 formed a grave set-back for the Berlin-Bagdad project, which would be ruined if these little states became strong enough, or united enough, to be independent. The break-up of the Balkan League and the second Balkan War of 1913 improved the situation from the German point of view. But they left Serbia unsatisfactorily strong, and Serbia distrusted Austria, and controlled the communications with Constantinople. Serbia must be destroyed; otherwise the Berlin-Bagdad project, and with it the world-dominance of which it was to be the main pillar, would come to naught. Austria was for attacking Serbia at once in 1913. Germany held her back: the widening of the Kiel Canal was not completed, and the fruits of the latest Army Acts were not yet fully reaped. But all was ready in 1914; and the Great Challenge was launched. It would have been launched at or about that time even if an

unpopular Austrian archduke, significantly unguarded by the Austrian police, had *not* been most opportunely murdered by an Austrian subject on Austrian territory. The murder was only a pretext. The real cause of the war was the resolution of Germany to strike for world-supremacy, and her belief that the time was favourable for the great adventure.

Meanwhile, what had the threatened empires been doing during the years of strenuous German preparation which began in 1911? Their governments could not but be aware of the enormous activity which was taking place in that country—which was unthreatened on any side—though they probably did not know how thorough and how elaborate it was. What steps did they take to guard against the danger? Russia was busy constructing strategic railways, to make the movement of troops easier; she was erecting new munition factories. But neither could be quickly got ready. France imposed upon the whole of her manhood the obligation of serving for three instead of for two years in the army. Britain reorganised her small professional army, created the Territorial Force, and began the training of a large officer class in all the universities and public schools. But she did not attempt to create a national army. If she had done so, this would have been a signal for the precipitation of the war. Besides, Britain obstinately clung to the belief that so monstrous a crime as Germany seemed to be contemplating could never be com-

mitted by a civilised nation; and she trusted mainly to her fleet for her own security.

But Britain unquestionably laboured with all her might to conjure away the nightmare. From 1906 onwards she had made, in vain, repeated attempts to persuade Germany to accept a mutual disarmament or retardation of naval construction. In 1912 she resolved upon a more definite step. The German newspapers were full of talk about the British policy of 'encircling' Germany in order to attack and destroy her, which they attributed mainly to Sir Edward Grey. It was a manifest absurdity, since the Franco-Russian alliance was formed in 1894, at a time when Britain was on bad terms with both France and Russia, and the agreements later made with these two countries were wholly devoted to removing old causes of dispute between them. But the German people obviously believed it. Perhaps the German government also believed it? Britain resolved to remove this apprehension. Accordingly in 1912 Lord Haldane was sent to Germany with a formal and definite statement, authorised by the Cabinet, to the effect that Britain had made no alliance or understanding which was aimed against Germany, and had no intention of doing so. That being so, since Germany need have no fear of an attack from Britain, why should not the two powers agree to reduce their naval expenditure? The German reply was that to stop the naval programme was impossible, but that construction

might be *delayed*, on one condition—that both powers should sign a formal agreement drawn up by Germany. Each power was to pledge itself to absolute neutrality in any European war in which the other was engaged. Each power was to undertake to make no new alliances. But this agreement was not to affect existing alliances or the duties arising under them. This proposal was an obvious trap, and the German ministers who proposed it must have had the poorest opinion of the intelligence of English statesmen if they thought it was likely to be accepted. For observe that it left Germany, in conjunction with Austria, free to attack France and Russia. It left the formidable Triple Alliance unimpaired. But it tied the hands of Britain, who had no existing European alliances, enforced neutrality upon her in such a war, and compelled her to look on idly and wait her turn. In the present war, Germany could have pleaded that she was bound to take part by the terms of her alliance with Austria, who began it; but Britain would have been compelled to stand aloof. A very convenient arrangement for Germany, but not an arrangement that promised well for the peace of the world!

Even this rebuff did not dishearten Britain. Feeling that Germany might have some reasonable ground of complaint in the fact that her share of the extra-European world was so much less than that of France or of Britain herself, Britain attempted to come to an agreement on

this head, such as would show that she had no desire to prevent the imperial expansion of Germany. A treaty was proposed and discussed, and was ready to be submitted to the proper authorities for confirmation in June 1914. It has never been made public, because the war cancelled it before it came into effect, and we do not know its terms. But we do know that the German colonial enthusiast, Paul Rohrbach, who has seen the draft treaty, has said that the concessions made by Britain were astonishingly extensive, and met every reasonable German demand. This sounds as if the proposals of the treaty, whatever they were, had been recklessly generous. But this much is clear, that the government which had this treaty in its possession when it forced on the war was not to be easily satisfied. It did not want merely external possessions. It wanted supremacy; it wanted world-dominion.

One last attempt the British government made in the frenzied days of negotiation which preceded the war. Sir Edward Grey had begged the German government to make *any* proposal which would make for peace, and promised his support beforehand; he had received no reply. He had undertaken that if Germany made any reasonable proposal, and France or Russia objected, he would have nothing further to do with France or Russia. Still there was no reply. Imagining that Germany might still be haunted by what Bismarck called 'the nightmare of coalition,' and might be rushing into war now because she

THE
WORLD EMPIRES
IN 1900-1914.

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feared a war in the future under more unfavourable conditions, he had pledged himself, if Germany would only say the word which would secure the peace, to use every effort to bring about a general understanding among the great powers which would banish all fears of an anti-German combination. It was of no use. The reply was the suggestion that Britain should bind herself to neutrality in this war on the following conditions: (*a*) that Germany should be given a free hand to violate the neutrality of Belgium (which Britain was bound by treaty to defend), on the understanding that Belgium should be reinstated after she had served her purpose, if she had offered no resistance; Belgium, be it noted, being bound in honour to offer resistance by the very treaty which Germany proposed to violate; and (*b*) that after France had been humiliated and beaten to the earth for the crime of possessing territories which Germany coveted, she should be restored to independence, and Germany should be content to annex her 5,000,000 square miles of colonies. In return for this undertaking Britain was to be—allowed to hold aloof from the war, and await her turn.

There is no getting over these facts. The aim of Germany was nothing less than world-dominion. The destiny of the whole globe was to be put to the test. Surely this was the very insanity of megalomania.

X

WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

THE issue of the great conflict lies still upon the lap of the gods. Yet one thing is, we may hope, already assured. The Germans will not win that complete victory upon which they had calculated, and which was to bring as its prize the mastery of the world. We can now form some judgment of the extent of the calamity which this would have meant for humanity. There would have remained in the world no power capable of resisting this grim and ugly tyrant-state, with its brute strength and bestial cruelty as of a gorilla in the primæval forest, reinforced by the cold and pitiless calculus of the man of science in his laboratory; unless, perhaps, Russia had in time recovered her strength, or unless America had not merely screwed up her courage to resist, but had been allowed the time to organise her forces for resistance. Of the great empires which the modern age has brought into being, the Russian would have survived as a helpless and blinded mammoth; the French Empire would have vanished, and the proud and noble land of France would have sunk into vassalage and despair; the British Empire would assuredly have dissolved

into its component parts, for its strength is still too much concentrated in the motherland for it to be able to hold together once her power was broken. After a few generations, that will no longer be the case; but to-day it is so, and the dream of a partnership of free nations which had begun to dawn upon us would have been shattered for ever by a complete German victory. Some of the atoms of what once was an empire might have been left in freedom, but they would have been powerless to resist the decrees of the Master-state. There would have been but one world-power; and that a power whose attitude towards backward races has been illustrated by the ruthless massacre of the Hereros; whose attitude towards ancient but disorganised civilisations has been illustrated by the history of Kiao-chau and by the celebrated allocution of the Kaiser to his soldiers on the eve of the Boxer expedition, when he bade them outdo the ferocity of Attila and his Huns; whose attitude towards kindred civilisations on the same level as their own has been illustrated before the war in the treatment of Danes, Poles, and Alsatians, and during the war in the treatment of Belgium, of the occupied districts in France, of Poland and of Serbia. The world would have lain at the mercy of an insolent and ruthless tyranny, the tyranny of a *kultur* whose ideal is the uniformity of a perfect mechanism, not the variety of life. Such a fate humanity could not long have tolerated; yet before the iron mechanism could have been shattered, if

once it had been established, there must have been inconceivable suffering, and civilisation must have fallen back many stages towards barbarism. From this fate, we may perhaps claim, the world was saved from the moment when not Britain only, but the British Empire, refused to await its turn according to the German plan, threw its whole weight into the scale, and showed that, though not organised for war, it was not the effete and decadent power, not the fortuitous combination of discordant and incoherent elements, which German theory had supposed; but that Freedom can create a unity and a virile strength capable of withstanding even the most rigid discipline, capable of enduring defeat and disappointment undismayed; but incapable of yielding to the insolence of brute force.

It is still possible that the war may end in what is called an inconclusive peace; and as it is certain that of all her unrighteous gains that to which Germany will most desperately cling will be her domination over the Austrian and Turkish Empires, with the prospect which it affords of a later and more fortunate attempt at world-power, an inconclusive peace would mean that the whole world would live in constant dread of a renewal of these agonies and horrors in a still more awful form. What the effect of this would be upon the extra-European dominions of powers which would be drained of their manhood and loaded with the burden of the past war and the burden of preparation for the coming

war, it is beyond our power to imagine. But it seems likely that the outer world would very swiftly begin to revise its judgment as to the value of that civilisation which it has, upon the whole, been ready to welcome; and chaos would soon come again.

Finally, it is possible that the Evil Power may be utterly routed, and the allied empires, tried by fire, may be given the opportunity and the obligation of making, not merely a new Europe, but a new world. If that chance should come, how will they use it? To begin with, must they not necessarily decree that no non-German people, however primitive, shall be sentenced to live under German rule? Should we not be haunted by the spirits of slaughtered Armenians, of tortured and enslaved Belgians and Serbians, of children and women, nurses and doctors, suddenly murdered upon the high seas, if we willingly left any human beings of an alien race under such a domination? It is a sad thing that a numerous, intelligent, and industrious people should be excluded from their natural share in the organisation of the world. But since they have allowed themselves to be conquered by the spirit we have seen at work, what alternative is there?

It is unwise, however, at this date to speculate upon the decisions that will be reached at the close of a war which is still in mid course. Such speculations are futile and profitless. But there is one group of questions which, at the end of our

survey, we cannot avoid asking ourselves. Will these vast empires survive? Will they continue to bring, as upon the whole they have in the past brought, an increasing peace and justice to the subjects over whom they rule? They will not do so if in the future they continue to regard one another with fear and suspicion, and to look upon their subject-peoples merely as providing the implements for a war of destruction one against the other, to be waged by commerce in peace-time, and by 'man-power' and machine-power in war. Yet such a rivalry, and such an employment of imperial resources, in preparation for the appalling nightmare of a future and still more destructive war, are almost inevitable unless the danger of war is banished or reduced to a minimum. If that cannot be done, the burden that must be laid upon the peoples of these empires, and the intolerable anticipation of what is to come, will make their yoke seem indeed a heavy one; will probably bring about their disintegration; and will end that ascendancy of Western civilisation over the world which the last four centuries have established. And justly; since that civilisation will thus be made to stand, not for Justice and Liberty, but for Injustice and Oppression.

But how can the mutual jealousies of the great empires be conjured away? There is only one mode that seems to present any hope of success. It is that they should be administered not with a view to the advantage of a master-state and to the increase

of its power to do harm, but as a trust, for the welfare of their subjects, and for the common advantage of the civilised world. That may appear a remote prospect. Yet if it be true that one of the great empires has (with many lapses and shortcomings) adopted this as its rule of action, the prospect should not appear hopeless. And may we not claim that this has come to be the ruling principle of the British Empire, which asserts no monopoly of trade or privilege for its ruling race, but welcomes the co-operation of all peoples in the development of the vast resources which it administers, and strives to protect the rights and respect the usages of even the most simple and primitive peoples? Were the great empires able to agree upon some such broad programme of action, the rule of Europe over the world would indeed be secured, and the reasons for mutual jealousy would be largely conjured.

It would, of course, be unduly sanguine to hope that such a solution will be reached at any early date. But it is only by some such solution that the organisation of a rational peace will ultimately be made possible. For the organisation of peace does not now concern Europe alone; it must deal with the whole world, and must especially concern itself with the position and relations of the great world-states. If they are to survive—if the influence of Western civilisation over the world is to be secured—these empires must save themselves from the danger of becoming terrors to one another, burdens, because of these terrors,

to their subjects, and overshadowing, oppressive, restricting forces stunting the life of those civilised communities which have not developed into world-states. The world-states are such recent things that we have not yet found a place for them in our political philosophy. But unless we find a place for them, and think in terms of them, in the future, we shall be in danger of a terrible shipwreck.

To speculate upon the future in any detail would be out of place here. But there is one obvious fact of the situation which very directly concerns us, and upon which something must be said. Whatever else may happen, the war must necessarily bring a crisis in the history of the British Empire. On a vastly greater scale the situation of 1763 is being reproduced. Now, as then, the Empire will emerge from a war for existence, in which mother and daughter lands alike have shared. Now, as then, the strain and pressure of the war will have brought to light deficiencies in the system of the Empire. Now, as then, the most patent of these deficiencies will be the fact that, generous as the self-governing powers of the great Dominions have been, they still have limits; and the irresistible tendency of self-government to work towards its own fulfilment will once more show itself. For there are two spheres in which even the most fully self-governing of the empire-nations have no effective control: they do not share in the determination of foreign policy, and they do not share in the

direction of imperial defence. The responsibility for foreign policy, and the responsibility, and with it almost the whole burden, of organising imperial defence, have hitherto rested solely with Britain. Until the Great War, foreign policy seemed to be a matter of purely European interest, not directly concerning the great Dominions; nor did the problems of imperial defence appear very pressing or urgent. But now all have realised that not merely their interests, but their very existence, may depend upon the wise conduct of foreign relations; and now all have contributed the whole available strength of their manhood to support a struggle in whose direction they have had no effective share. These things must henceforth be altered; and they can be altered only in one or other of three ways. Either the great Dominions will become independent states, as the American colonies did, and pursue a foreign policy and maintain a system of defence of their own; or the Empire must reshape itself as a sort of permanent offensive and defensive alliance, whose external policy and modes of defence will be arranged by agreement; or some mode of common management of these and other questions must be devised. The first of these solutions is unlikely to be adopted, not only because the component members of the Empire are conscious of their individual weakness, but still more because the memory of the ordeal through which all have passed must form an indissoluble bond. Yet rashness or high-handedness in the

treatment of the great issue might lead even to this unlikely result. If either of the other two solutions is adopted, the question will at once arise of the place to be occupied, in the league or in the reorganised super-state, of all those innumerable sections of the Empire which do not yet enjoy, and some of which may never enjoy, the full privileges of self-government; and above all, the place to be taken by the vast dominion of India, which though it is not, and may not for a long time become, a fully self-governing state, is yet a definite and vitally important unit in the Empire, entitled to have its needs and problems considered, and its government represented, on equal terms with the rest. The problem is an extraordinarily difficult one; perhaps the most difficult political problem that has ever faced the sons of men. But it is essentially the same problem which has continually recurred in the history of British imperialism, though it now presents itself on a vastly greater scale, and in a far more complex form, than ever before: it is the problem of reconciling unity with liberty and variety; of combining nationality and self-government with imperialism, without impairing the rights of either. And beyond any doubt the most tremendous and fascinating political question which now awaits solution in the world, is the question whether the political instinct of the British peoples, and the genius of self-government, will find a way out of these difficulties, as they have found a way out of so many others. Patience,

mutual tolerance, willingness to compromise, will be required in the highest measure if the solution is to be found; but these are the qualities which self-government cultivates.

'A thing that is wholly a sham,' said Treitschke, speaking of the British Empire, 'cannot in this world of ours, endure for ever.' Why did this Empire appear to Treitschke to be 'wholly a sham'? Was it not because it did not answer to any definition of the word 'Empire' to be found in German political philosophy; because it did not mean dominion and uniformity, but liberty and variety; because it did not rest upon Force, as, in his view, every firmly established state must do; because it was not governed by a single master, whose edicts all its subjects must obey? But for 'a thing that is wholly a sham' men do not lay down their lives, in thousands and in hundreds of thousands, not under the pressure of compulsion, but by a willing self-devotion; for the defence of 'a thing that is wholly a sham' men will not stream in from all the ends of the earth, abandoning their families and their careers, and offering without murmur or hesitation themselves and all they have and are. There must be a reality in the thing that calls forth such sacrifices, a reality of the kind to which *realpolitik*, with its concentration upon purely material concerns, is wholly blind: it is the reality of an ideal of honour, and justice, and freedom. And if the Germans have been deceived in their calculations of *realpolitik*, is it not

perhaps because they have learnt to regard honour, and justice, and freedom as 'things that are wholly shams'?

This amazing political structure, which refuses to fall within any of the categories of political science, which is an empire and yet not an empire, a state and yet not a state, a super-nation incorporating in itself an incredible variety of peoples and races, is not a structure which has been designed by the ingenuity of man, or created by the purposive action of a government; it is a natural growth, the product of the spontaneous activity of innumerable individuals and groups springing from among peoples whose history has made liberty and the tolerance of differences their most fundamental instincts; it is the product of a series of accidents, unforeseen, but turned to advantage by the unfailing and ever-new resourcefulness of men habituated to self-government. There is no logic or uniformity in its system, which has arisen from an infinite number of makeshifts and tentative experiments, yet in all of these a certain consistency appears, because they have been presided over by the genius of self-government. It spreads over a quarter of the whole land-area of the globe, and is inhabited by more than a quarter of the human race. It is distributed over every continent, is washed by every ocean, includes half the dust of islands that Nature has scattered about the seas of the world, controls almost all the main avenues of the world's sea-going commerce, and is linked

together by ten thousand ships perpetually going to and fro. Weak for offensive purposes, because its resources are so scattered, it is, except at a few points, almost impregnable against attack, if its forces are well organised. It includes among its population representatives of almost every human race and religion, and every grade of civilisation, from the Australian Bushman to the subtle and philosophic Brahmin, from the African dwarf to the master of modern industry or the scholar of universities. Almost every form of social organisation and of government known to man is represented in its complex and many-hued fabric. It embodies five of the most completely self-governing communities which the world has known, and four of these control the future of the great empty spaces that remain for the settlement of white men. It finds place for the highly organised caste system by which the teeming millions of India are held together. It preserves the simple tribal organisation of the African clans. To different elements among its subjects this empire appears in different aspects. To the self-governing Dominions it is a brotherhood of free nations, co-operating for the defence and diffusion of common ideas and of common institutions. To the ancient civilisations of India or of Egypt it is a power which, in spite of all its mistakes and limitations, has brought peace instead of turmoil, law instead of arbitrary might, unity instead of chaos, justice instead of oppression, freedom for the development of the

capacities and characteristic ideas of their peoples, and the prospect of a steady growth of national unity and political responsibility. To the backward races it has meant the suppression of unending slaughter, the disappearance of slavery, the protection of the rights and usages of primitive and simple folk against reckless exploitation, and the chance of gradual improvement and emancipation from barbarism. But to all alike, to one quarter of the inhabitants of the world, it has meant the establishment of the Reign of Law, and of the Liberty which can only exist under its shelter. In some degree, though imperfectly as yet, it has realised within its own body all the three great political ideas of the modern world. It has fostered the rise of a sense of nationhood in the young communities of the new lands, and in the old and decaying civilisations of the most ancient historic countries. It has given a freedom of development to self-government such as history has never before known. And by linking together so many diverse and contrasted peoples in a common peace, it has already realised, for a quarter of the globe, the ideal of internationalism on a scale undreamt of by the most sanguine prophets of Europe.

Truly this empire is a fabric so wonderful, so many-sided, and so various in its aspects, that it may well escape the rigid categories of a German professor, and seem to him 'wholly a sham.' Now is the crisis of its fate: and if the wisdom

of its leaders can solve the riddle of the Sphinx which is being put to them, the Great War will indeed have brought, for a quarter of the world, and not for that quarter alone, the culmination of modern history.

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